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Vol. 12-#3-Issue 69-April/May 2016

## 420 issue

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DAYGIO ABORTIONS  
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# ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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## Artificial Dissemination

Interview by Ira Hunter

**AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Artificial Dissemination: You are talking to both of us, 'cause we do everything together. There are only two of us, so we talk twice as much.

Shawna Heist: I'm Shawna Heist, guitarist and screaming backup vocals. I'm infamous for wearing really short mini-skirts, for being a real shitty driver, and for going on and on about the fact that my ancestors did not evolve from apes. I've been playing guitar in punk bands in Toronto since about 1994; I'm also in another band called Sluts on 45 that has been around since about 2010... If you search for porn on the internet, you will find us!

Jamie Problem: I am Jamie Problem, drummer and lead vocals. Infamous for many things, depending on who you ask. Beer, red-dyed hair, nudity and world traveler in the past. Intergalactic traveling with Artificial Dissemination in the future. I come from a very small town in Ontario, and started playing punk rock in 1982 with



present and zoomed into the future with Artificial Dissemination.

**AU: Give us a brief band history.**

AD: Our paths crossed at a few points during the 80s and 90s when our respective bands played shows together. We lost touch at around the turn of the century, but a cosmic freak out and digital anomaly put us back in contact with each other about three years ago. We quickly realized there was a common destiny for us in AD, so within a few months we were putting our music and imaginations together. Only problem was, we are both guitar players by trade. So Jamie learned how to play the drums and Shawna

learned how to sing better backups. We always wanted it to be a two-piece band, right from the start, and had dreams of touring across the country by train, until we checked out the VIA Rail prices and decided an old truck is close enough.

**AU: What's the meaning behind the band's name?**

AD: The name means many things, but the basis of it is the dissemination of information, propaganda, brainwashing, etc, done through the digital world we live in. The vast majority of the information the average person gets is via the internet and *The National Enquirer*, rather than personal experience and books. We are shaped by our environment and it is becoming more remote, detached and artificial. It's also a word play

Problem Children. The next 18 years were full of blurs, beers, tours, albums and world education. I slipped into the shadows for a while, then emerged after meeting Shawna Heist! I drew on everything from my past, everything happening in the

on artificial insemination. We think the experience is just as exciting as the final result... if you know what I mean.

**AU: Describe your sound for the deaf people reading this.**

AD: Combine all the thoughts and ideas you've had in your past with all the anger, frustration, and joy you've ever felt. Then drink 12 beers and have the most fun you've ever had in life... do this with your best friends. If they are not available, make some new ones!

**AU: What are you guys trying to say with your music?**

AD: The best word we've come across to describe our music is empowerment. You can say whatever you feel, whether it's funny, angry, nonsense, or speaking out against an injustice. You don't have to be defined by a genre unless you define yourself. We decided to be a two-piece band because we thought as partners, we could get more things done more efficiently. Most people see it as a limitation, but we see it as a challenge. We both grew up in the punk scene of the 80s and 90s, so that is where our roots, DIY ethics, and many of our musical influences come from. We draw on a wide range of other music, like garage, psychobilly, surf, metal, and even cheesy pop songs. So what we're saying is: do what you want, be what you are, speak for yourself and say what you feel!

**AU: What is the current state of the Hamilton / Toronto music scene? Any other shredding bands we should know about?**

AD: The Hamilton scene is mostly awesome. There are always things you'd like to change or improve, but there are a lot of great bands, venues and record stores. As a whole, the bands, venues and record shops do a pretty good job of supporting each other and there's a lot of pride in The Hammer. Jamie helps organize Sunday Slamfest with Hammer City Records. It's an all-ages/ licensed show featuring locals and bands from all over Canada that's been happening on the last Sunday of every month for nearly five years. So many killer bands in The Hammer....Snakecharmer, TV Freaks, Born Wrong, Flesh Rag, Get Off The Cop, Sick of Shit, Come Out Swinging, Astral Witch, Gnarly Skull...

The Toronto scene, like any big city, is always in flux and transition... people and places coming and going, alongside a core that has been around since the very beginning. Now, there is a resurgence of Burlesque – punk shows around the Queen and Bathurst area! Kensington Market is alive and well, putting up a strong fight to keep out the hipsters. There are super fun shows that happen on some Sunday afternoons there – at Graffiti's Bar & Grill during the "Heavy Metal Brunch" hours. Shredders that Shawna knows and loves are: Death Valley Parkway, Sago, Defile, Toxic Deathula, Fuckhawk, Thrashards, Sista Fista, and of course, the mainstays The Terminals, Politickill Incorect, BFG, Murdersquad T.O.

**AU: Tell us about your latest release.**

AD: *Take Us To Your Leader* was recorded on 2" tape by Siegfried Meier over a weekend at an amazing studio he built in rural SW Ontario. The

## TORONTO TRASH

mastering and lacquering was done by Noah Mintz at The Lacquer Channel and we released it on 12" vinyl. All very old-school, right down to the fanzine/lyric sheet insert and silkscreened covers we did and released on our own Seminal Recordz label. We want our product to reflect the band. DIY, fun, personal and thoughtful.

**AU: Tour plans?**

AD: On the immediate horizon, we have a mini-tour from April 23rd to May 1st. We have a weekend warmup in Hamilton and Toronto with the Mother Fuckers (who are touring this way from Calgary), and then we are going out east to pull off six shows in five days. After that, we will be hitting different parts of Ontario, and Quebec on a regular basis, as usual. Last summer we went out west, and we will likely return this fall. Anything can happen!

**AU: Tell us something you don't want your mother to know.**

AD: Jamie doesn't want his mummy to know how lame he thinks her cooking is... he tells her everything else! When Shawna was a wee teen, she had a secret party when her parents went away one weekend. The stoners in the crowd used two butter knives to heat up their hash and of course, burned them to shit. She had to throw them away. Shawna quit smoking dope a few years ago.

**AU: Final Words?**

AD: Live fast, die old, get more shit done!

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## Selfist

Interview by David Goertzen

Selfist is a band that has almost as many genre tags on Bandcamp as they have songs recorded. They are a melodic hardcore skate punk band straight in the heart of the Northwest. The members, Stepan Soroka, Kieran Glennon, Eric Morrison and Jack Briscoe, have been striving to write conscious music that is equally as heavy lyrically as it is musically. I've been a huge fan of the members and music since meeting them in early 2012. They add a fast, blistering edge that fits perfectly in Vancouver's thriving hardcore scene, with the perfect hint of personality and pissed-off perseverance. The kind of guys that would take a bullet for the people close to them and kick the shit out of the person holding the gun. Check out one of their amazing live shows if you get the chance. I recently had the opportunity to chat with frontman Stepan Soroka about his political approach, favourite places to skateboard, and the future of Selfist.

**Absolute Underground: First off, what's up Selfist? How's it hanging over in the big city of Vancouver?**

Stepan Soroka: What's up, David? Well, it's wet. We are getting rained on incessantly.

**AU: Let's dive right in with *Dystopia Now*, what's the meaning behind the name and the artwork? That image is pretty grim.**

SS: The name was heavily influenced by the writing of Chris Hedges, who we sample throughout the album. Hedges spent many years as a conflict reporter in places like the Balkans and the Middle East, where he witnessed societies collapse and descend into violent chaos. He writes that he is seeing a similar pattern emerging in the US – political and social unrest preceded by economic decline. He says that these are the first death throes of the American empire, and I

believe Canada's fate is inexorably linked to America's. On a larger, global scale, our devastation of and disregard for our natural environment has triggered a seemingly irreversible descent into climate catastrophe. So the title refers to the idea that our society and even the human race in general is not just teetering on the edge of a very tall cliff, but has stepped over and begun a freefall. The nightmarish future portrayed in science fiction novels and films is already here.

**AU: How do you guys think the punk/hardcore scene in Vancouver differs from other Canadian cities? Do you think the West coast has a different approach to its delivery of the punk vibes you guys are dishing out?**

SS: I think the greatest thing about the hardcore scene in Vancouver is its diversity. We have so many bands that draw from different influences and play very different styles of hardcore, and for the most part, everyone is playing and attending the same shows. There is a lot of unity in that sense, which is fundamental to the concept of hardcore. However, people often seem reluctant to step out of their comfort zone and move around and participate. There seems to be a lot of standing around and, at the same time, a lot of really aggressive throwdown style dancing, too, which I think alienates a lot of the audience. I don't want to tell people how to dance, but I would like to see more of a balance – the mosh pit should be an inclusive place where boundaries such as body-type and gender are transgressed. It should be a place where anyone can join in to release their frustration and abandon their ego, rather than a hyper-masculine proving ground. It would be nice to see more participation and more respectful aggression.

**AU: I know you guys are branded as a skate punk band, so I was wondering who your favourite skater is, and why?**

SS: That's a tough question. I've always loved watching footage of Peter Hewitt. His style strikes the perfect balance between finesse and danger. There are so many great local skaters in Vancouver, too. One of my favourites is James Clarke, aka The Frontside Kid, though he is now more of a Frontside Man. He is a mutant freak who boosts harder than anyone and I hope his raw-power approach to skating reaches a mass audience someday. He is also very talented at passing out in a variety of different locations.

**AU: What is your absolute favourite spot in BC to skate, and the craziest trick you have pulled off there?**

SS: We've just finished a huge build at Leaside, which is the DIY park here in Vancouver and a memorial for local skater and artists Lee Matasi. This was already one of my favourite places to skate and it just got a lot sicker. The new features are tall and steep, and there is plenty of pool coping to get aggressive on. My craziest trick is yet to be done, but I've got a few up my sleeve! If you come to skate, don't bring glass, clean up after yourself and, for fuck's sake, keep your pegs out of the park. The SBC ramp and Hastings Bowl are also great places to skate in Vancouver. Shout out to all the bowl trolls.

**AU: How is the future looking for you guys? Any shows coming up or plans for new recordings in the summer months?**

SS: We have recently had a new drummer, Jack, join the band, and the future is looking bright. He is bringing a lot of fresh energy to Selfist. We are currently writing towards a full-length, which will be out one day, hopefully. We are also hitting the studio to record a cover song for a tribute album to The Rebel Spell, whose singer Todd tragically passed away last year. They're one of our favourite bands ever and we are humbled to be a part of that. We have a show coming up in Vancouver on June 11th, and we are currently looking for some greasy house parties and basement gigs to play. Hit us up!

**AU: What's your favourite local venue to play? Are you guys more of an all-ages venue band or a piss-soaked back alley kind of punkers?**

SS: We love it all. All-ages gigs are very important to the scene, and we love playing them; some of

## HARDCORE ALLEY



our most fun sets have been in bars, also. We try not to pigeonhole ourselves in regards to venues or musical style, for that matter. Punk rock is about demolishing boundaries, so we try to mix it up and reach different audiences. Our favourite all-ages spot to play is 333, and for 19+, SBC is the place to be! What could be better than a 65-foot miniramp to skate in between sets? Nothing, that's what!

**AU: Thanks a lot guys, and good luck in the future. But before we go, do you have some last words for the readers? Anything you want to get off your chest before you expire?**

SS: Thank you for taking the time to speak with us! Thanks to anyone who has supported us in any way, came to our shows, or listened to our tunes. I don't want to Backtrack or be a Ruiner so I will save it for Another Breath.

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**Buzzard**  
*Interview by Michael F. Carnage*

Buzzard is a three-piece stoner rock band from Victoria that's been banging around since 2009. They started strong, but then hit a few snags with line-up changes, injuries and life just happening. This last year, they've got it all back together, playing a bunch of shows, writing lots of new songs, and in general, making some noise. I recently interviewed the three of them, Christian, guitar/vocals; Devon, drums, and Dane on bass. They had a lot to say, but I managed to whittle it down into this interview:

**Absolute Underground: What brought you guys together as a band?**  
Dane: I had known Christian for years. He called me on a Thursday, asking me if I could learn an entire set for Monday. I learned the material but the show was cancelled. I stuck around afterwards

for the street cred.  
Devon: I remember bumbling into Christian after the bar one night and half-assedly offered my services. A bit later, he took me up on said offer, and here we are.  
**AU: How did your first show go, and what did you learn?**  
Christian: The first show was nerve-wracking, 'cause it was the first time I had ever taken on lead vocals and [played with] a three-piece band. We learned to keep at it, no matter what.  
Dane: My first show was at Megan Hamburger's birthday at the Ice House. The other bands were Communist Eyes, and Jack Warren's Class of 1492. I learned that at my next show, my bass amp would stop working because it was covered in alcohol and attractive men.

**AU: It looks like there were two years between recordings, what happened?**  
Dane: Christian tried to jump a bunch of sharks with his motorcycle. He nailed the landing, but was then struck by Bruce Jenner's car and broke his wrist.  
**AU: What's been your favourite Victoria show so far?**  
Devon: Mos Generator and Black Wizard for sure, but gotta throw in the couple we did with La Chinga and Moths and Locusts, particularly the Nanaimo one. That place is greasy.  
**AU: What's been your favourite out-of-town show?**  
Christian: In Squamish, with Boreas and Weirding. Those are some seriously rad people!  
Dane: Squamish was beautiful. Devon ordered fried chicken and waffles for dinner when we got there.

**AU: What's the inspiration for most of your music/songs?**  
Devon: Smoked-out jams, man.  
**AU: Who writes most of the songs?**  
Dane: Christian does most of the writing. He presents us with a riff and yells at Devon and I until we come up with something.  
**AU: What are your plans for the next year?**  
Christian: With amount of time it's taken us to finish this album *Carrion*, we are already starting to write for a follow-up album. We're hoping to do some touring.  
**AU: Who would you most love to tour with?**  
Christian: For me it would be Nebula, but seeing that they aren't together anymore, Red Fang.  
Devon: The Shrine. Those kids rock.  
Dane: FUZZ  
**AU: Who's your favourite band on the island?**

## VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

Christian: My favourite would be Moths and Locusts, but I love so many of our islands bands.  
Devon: Despite what a particular pretentious record collector may tell you, there's a shitload of good bands around. Right now I like Total Shit, The Purrvverts, Sewer Rat, Hearse ... hell, even Line Traps.  
Dane: Nearly Dead.

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## Gene Hoglan

### Master of His Universe

By Cameron Dalgetty

After 31 years in metal, over 40 recording credits with more than 25 different bands, including some of heavy metal's most influential artists, Death, Strapping Young Lad, and Devin Townsend, it is evident that Gene Hoglan has truly manifested his life-long dream to become a busy, working musician. As an 11-year-old, enamored with his heroes in KISS and Rush, through "the character-building days" of sleeping in his truck and living off \$27 a week, right up to his current roles in Testament, Dark Angel and Zimmer's Hole, Gene has put the practice of "willing his life" in the direction he wanted it to go, even before it was a thing. "I put everything out to the universe, I am a master of the universe, I make it happen!" he says. "The universe listens on a daily basis. This is something I have practiced my entire life... Now they have all these hippy terms for it, but it's still my vision, my reality of how I lead my life... Playing bad-ass music and helping others achieve their vision."

In 1985 at the age of 18, Gene joined Dark Angel, and in doing so, created the machine-gun-like double bass rhythms that stood out and that are still prevalent in today's metal sound. Despite going on hiatus a couple of times, Gene was

always able to keep the thought of Dark Angel alive because, as he puts it, he didn't want it to be one of those bands that just disappeared. Currently, Gene is writing riffs, lyrics and melodies on his own, and with Dark Angel founder Jim Durkin, whenever they can get in a room together. They will be playing a few one-off shows when they can, but he assures everyone that the new record is going to be, "...Fucking amazing, because I am writing some of the coolest shit I've ever written."

Gene began a working relationship with Testament's founder, Eric Peterson, in 1997 that saw him play on what remains their darkest release, *Demonic*. 15 years later, Gene would help Testament regain its footing as one of the best thrash bands on the planet when he returned to play on one of their most critically praised albums, *Dark Roots of Earth*, and continues to "drive the bus" from behind his kit. "The new record features some their most aggressive playing together," he says of Testament's upcoming release. "All Testament fans will be cheering, 'Fuck yeah!' when they hear it." Gene's goal for the album is to help Eric completely realize his vision. "If I can be the concrete block that helps get all those ideas that are swirling around in Eric's head down..." he says, "When we're done with the record, I want [Eric] to be able to say that he couldn't have programmed the drums this good - this is exactly what I want."

Zimmers Hole came calling in 2007 with their third release, *While You Were Shouting At The*

*Devil...*, which would allow Gene to explore the more theatrical side of metal, while allowing everyone to let their guard down have fun when it came to writing and performing. Now, after an eight-year sabbatical, Zimmers Hole is back, working on a new record and have lined up some dates in late May in Alberta, as well. "It's a blast playing in The Hole," Gene says, "These shows are going to be so bad-ass... Come with your fun pants on, people!" Another thing Gene is excited about is working with Laura Christine again, who, after eight years of being courted by Zimmers Hole, has added her incredible guitar playing to the insanity. "She's an amazing musician, my best friend, and the reason I am still alive," he says. "Her influence on me - I feel it all the time."

For Gene, Laura was instrumental in helping him change his lifestyle and conquer battles with diabetes and weight, so that he could continue to do what he loves. "We used to be rock and rollers, now it's all raw granola!" he says. "I am going to be doing this when I am 70, 80. I am going to be playing hard, brutal, thrashing double bass when I am 70, no problem!"

When I ask him about living his lifelong dream, Gene says, "I always go where the fun is. I only like working with bands and people that I like! Money will always be there, fun comes first, why be miserable while making money?"

A true master of his universe, the Atomic Clock has a long way to go before striking his final hour.

*Tune into CC Getty Saturdays at 5pm Eastern/2pm Pacific & Thursdays at 10pm Eastern/7pm Pacific, exclusively on [www.MetalNationRadio.com](http://www.MetalNationRadio.com)*



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## Dark Messiah

Interview by Mr. Anonymous

**AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Dark Messiah: We are just five dedicated guys who decided to form a band and dive headfirst into the local metal scene.

**AU: Give us a bit of background on the band. Who plays what, when and how did you form as a group?**

DM: The band consists of Stephen Chubaty on vocals and lyrics, Jonathan Hayward on lead guitar, Lawrence Reimer on Rhythm guitar, Jared McKnight, on bass and Dustin Tyler on drums. Jonathan decided to start a band in the summer of 2015, searching for and trying out different musicians from different genres to find the right mix for a unique sound. We went through a few

lineup changes until we became what is Dark Messiah today.

**AU: Tell us about your sound... do you guys endorse any particular genre description? What can we expect to hear at a Dark Messiah show?**

DM: When we started this band we never intended to fall into any specific genre. We just wanted to play heavy metal. Even though we are influenced by classic metal, we strive to create something new for the world of music. One of the first genres we were labelled as was thrash/groove... We are kind of against segregating metal music into different categories, but when people ask, we just go with that.

**AU: Do you have any physical releases we can check out?**

DM: Well we are currently in the studio recording our debut EP. It will be released and available sometime this summer.

**AU: What inspires you as a band? Anything you might find surprising?**

**Do you convey any particular messages or themes through your music, lyrically or otherwise?**

DM: Heavy riffs with hooks is what defines our sound. Every member of the band is a multi-instrumentalist and brings something unique to the creative process. Every member is influenced by many different styles of music even outside of metal. Every song we write starts with the simplest idea, whether it be a melody, lick, riff or even just a title. We go from there and just let the song evolve naturally. When it comes to lyrical themes, considering we're metal, we do tend to talk a lot about death. Though in truth, the title and the feel of each song dictates the direction of the lyrics.

**AU: There's something about bands hailing from frozen tundra that makes their music all the more haunting... how much, if at all, do you feel that your home province has contributed to or affected your sound as a band?**

DM: Well, when you live in a city that has winter eight months a year, it forces you into the basement to create music. What else are you going to do when it's so freaking cold? In all seriousness though, the isolation and desolation probably has a profound impact on our sound.

**AU: Building on that, what's the Winnipeg metal scene like these days? Any favourite local acts or venues?**

DM: When the band first started, we immediately lost two iconic venues, the Zoo and Ozzys. We wondered and hoped that other local establishments would take up the reins. Luckily, other places like The Pyramid Cabaret, The King's Hotel and the Windsor Hotel (just to name a few) have done just that. Some of the local acts that stand out for us are Tyrants Demise, Dreadnaut, Endless Chaos, Five Hundred Pound Furnace, and Awaiting The Answer, but this city has a great hidden underground scene, so the list could go

# WRETCHED WINNIPEG

on.

**AU: Tell us about the next few shows you're scheduled to play, anything you're particularly looking forward to?**

DM: Well Steve is really looking forward to playing one of our favourite venues, The Pyramid, on his birthday, April 8th. We are also anticipating a Friday the 13th show in May, and our eventual EP release party sometime in the summer. But you know, if you really want to stay up to date on our upcoming events (wink wink), you can always go to our social media pages!

**AU: What does the future hold for Dark Messiah? Do you plan on recording anything new or hitting the road in the near future?**

DM: After the release of our debut EP, we plan on recording our first full-length album around the same time next year, followed by a full-scale Canadian tour, but of course we always keep our eyes and ears open for any potential spur-of-the-moment opportunities that may arise.

**AU: Any final words for our readers? What should we know about Dark Messiah that we don't already?**

DM: We would like to thank you for taking the time for us. We would also like to thank the readers and our covenant of fans for the continued support. What you might not know is that we are always working tirelessly in and behind the scenes. We hope our fans enjoy and are surprised by our future endeavours.

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**08** INTRONAUT  
SCALE THE SUMMIT + NORTH

**09** HANG THE DJ 10TH ANNIVERSARY  
RETRO - NEW WAVE - CLASSIC ALTERNATIVE - GOTH - INDUSTRIAL - BRITPOP

**14** FAKE MUSTACHE

**16** TRITON  
MANCUB + LUSTRE CREAM, + NOSIS

**18** DRIVE-IN DOUBLE FEATURE  
NO COVER

**19** CAFE ABSINTHE  
NO COVER

**22** RAY ROCKET  
KJ JANSEN + RYAN DIX + GHOST FACTORY

**23** WOOHOO! SIMPSONS TRIVIA

**23** LONDON CALLING  
NO COVER BEFORE 11PM  
BRITPOP - SUBCULTURE - MANICATED - INDIE - NEW WAVE

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**13** BELVEDERE  
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**14** SNAK THE RIPPER  
CAPITOLE D + PYKE + WES PAUL + KROOKED KREW  
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## Armifera

Interview by Mr. Anonymous

### Absolute Underground: Introduce us to your band... what are you all about?

Chris Davidson: Armifera – 1000mph. [We are] five progressive thrash metal soldiers that have been waging war on Edmonton, Alberta since 2010. The major thrash bands that have been passing through Edmonton since the late 80s and early 90s have influenced all members of Armifera, and made us what we are today. With underlying tones of Anthrax, Kreator, Exodus, and melodic sounds of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, we are a five-man army that assaults your eardrums and melts your senses with bone-crushing riffs, high-velocity tempos and solid stage presence. After many battles and hardships, we solidified our number in 2012, and released our first album, *Eradication* on indie label Horror Pain Gore Death Productions in Philadelphia. The debut album, which was premiered on CJSR's Shoe Box radio show, reveals the story of the Hidden Order, a group of vigilantes that broke away from secret societies during the Crusades. We plan to tell more of the story in an animated series shortly in the future. Armifera is featured in an upcoming horror movie directed by Richard Boylan, originally titled *Death Metal Horror*. One of the tracks off of our album



is written about the storyline of that movie, which is now out on Amazon, titled *Heavy Metal Horror*, (www.heavymetalhorror.com). This high-octane band thrives on live shows, making our presence known and raising

our fists to the spirit of metal. Armifera and the Hidden Order will make you a believer!

### AU: What can we expect to see at your live show?

CD: We love to play live and we want others to love seeing us play live! You can expect to feel a surge of energy from us, packed with aggression, lasers, barbed wire and great songs that easily stick in your mind after the show.

### AU: What's this summer like for you guys? Any tours or studio time on the horizon?

CD: No tours planned yet, but we have a studio picked out for next album. After the Wacken battles and Shredmonton [Conference], we are off to Ourfest in Clive, Alberta.

### AU: Any shows coming up that you're particularly stoked for?

CD: We are really looking forward to all of them - Shredmonton, Ourfest, Shockerfest, and the Wacken battles.

### AU: Tell us more about *Eradication* - what was the writing and recording process like?

CD: The song writing went really easy. The riffs just flowed out and Damian our lead screamer channeled all his angst and aggression into the lyrics. The recording went smooth and it was fun to pick what samples we

wanted for the songs. We already had in mind what ideas we wanted for samples. However we had to specifically find the sounds that fit our vision.

### AU: What's the one band that you've always dreamed of sharing a stage with?

CD: We shared the stage before with Unleash the Archers, West of Hell, Order of Chaos and it would be a honour to share the stage again with those great bands. It would be so thrashin' to share the stage with Forbidden or Havok!

### AU: What does the far future hold for Armifera, any long-term goals?

CD: We are working on our second album to be released on Horror Pain Gore Death in Philadelphia. We are also soon to be working on our second video and have the CD release with our movie, *Heavy Metal Horror*. We have been talking to some tour companies and in the future would like to tour the UK.

## SHR-EDMONTON

### AU: Final words for our readers?

CD: Come and visit our website, watch the movie trailer, and support your local metal scene. If it weren't for fan support, nobody would have ever heard of Metallica or Iron Maiden.

I know there are a lot of bands, but if we all pull together and work for each other, then all bands will prosper.

Catch Armifera perform live in Edmonton on May 6th, at the Shredmonton Metal Festival & Conference!

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## Necronomicon

Interview by André Laniel

**Absolute Underground: How are you guys doing?**

Rob The Witch: We are doing good, but really busy with everything related to the new album. It's a little bit crazy, to be honest.

**AU: Excited about the release of your latest album?**

RTW: Yes we are. Things are looking really good, so we can't complain about that.

**AU: What inspired the songs on it?**

RTW: Well, we inspired ourselves from the previous albums. It's pretty much what we do most of the time, but we try to push a little bit further every time. We have been around for long enough to know where we're going and how the band needs to evolve. I personally think that the band had a natural evolution, when you look at how everything have been done during the last years. For sure, things have not maybe gone as fast as we wanted, but things are looking really clear ahead.

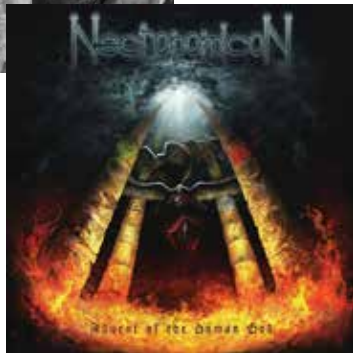
**AU: What was the concept of the album cover?**

RTW: It is kind of a mix of a little bit of every song. For example, it's easy to see the four pillars of the song "Unification of the Four Pillars," while the

characters can represent "The Golden Gods," in a sense. The main character can be seen as "I, Bringer of Light," and "The Advent of the Human God," at the same time, plus the image of the sky opening with the three figures coming down represents "The Descent."

**AU: Did you have a theme in mind for the album?**

RTW: The title itself says it, *Advent of the Human God*. When one becomes one with



everything and everything becomes all in one, it unifies the four elements of the Prima materia, and opens to the galactic consciousness to be a perfect channel and receptacle for the cosmic energy. It is the realization of the divine self in the flesh, in unity with the entire creation.

**AU: Did it take you a long time to get the record done?**

RTW: Not super long, but a little bit longer than what we had planned. We had some digital glitches or static that appeared on the guitar tracks while we were recording, and noticed it way too late. From that point, we had to restart the recording of the guitars. It was a little hard to get back into it, but eventually we got back on the right path and finished the album properly.

**AU: Do you have a tour coming up?**

RTW: We are working on it right now, but can't

announce anything since we are waiting for some answers and also other things are in negotiations with other bands. It's a lot of planning and politics, so sometimes it takes way more time than we would like, but that's the way it is for now. We can't wait to be back on the road. Hopefully, we will be able to visit new countries we haven't toured yet.

**AU: What does the future hold for Necronomicon?**

RTW: Well, we are really busy with the promo of the new album right now, but while waiting for

# MONTREAL MASSACRE

the next tour to be confirmed, we might start writing some new songs already. We have talked a little about it, we will see how it goes; we don't like to force things.

[facebook.com/NecronomiconMetal/](https://facebook.com/NecronomiconMetal/)  
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## Chris Stiles

Interview by Willow Gamberg

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Chris Stiles: Hey, I'm Chris Stiles and I'm a tattooer. I'm infamous for taking things as they come and flying by the seat of my pants.

**AU: How long have you been tattooing? What got you started?**

CS: I've been tattooing full-time for two years, but have been with the shop [Sanitary Electric] for four. Chad [Woodley] is definitely the reason I am where I am today. I'm endlessly grateful for him taking me in and showing me the ways.

**AU: What styles of tattooing do you specialize in?**

CS: I like to do a mix of everything, but I'd say my strongest style is

American traditional, with a personal twist. I've been doing more realistic black/grey stuff lately though, and really enjoying it.

**AU: Tell us a but about your shop, Sanitary Electric. Where are you located? What sets your shop apart?**

CS: We're located at 3377 Fraser, two blocks south of Kingsway and Fraser, in Vancouver BC.

Besides the incredibly high standard and quality of work set by the guys there, the shop has a really cool, no-bullshit, comfortable atmosphere. I'm lucky to be surrounded by awesome people who are not only inspiring, but also super supportive and constantly helping me push myself to improve.

**AU: What kind of music do you like to listen to while you tattoo?**

CS: Anything from obnoxious trap rap to real country or ambient black metal... I will listen to anything as long as it sounds sincere.

**AU: Do you work in any other kinds of visual art or mediums?**

CS: I paint flash, but I feel like that's pretty directly related to tattooing. I'm also the vocalist for a hardcore band called WTCHDR.

**AU: What's the strangest request for a tattoo you've ever gotten?**

CS: To be honest, I never know how to answer that question because, well, I'm a pretty weird guy myself and nothing really strikes me as odd!

**AU: Do you have a favourite piece you've done? Any pieces you've**



**always wanted to do but haven't managed to yet?**

CS: I did a skull with wings on one of my best clients' lower stomach, which ended up being one of my favourite pieces. I'm really stoked on doing anything animal- or nature-related, and [I have] a mild obsession with snakes.

**AU: Do you have any other long-term goals as an artist?**

CS: To keep pushing myself to progress, to always stay open-minded and remember

that there's always more to learn.

**AU: Any advice to young tattoo artists just getting started?**

CS: There are already too many of us, go do something else!

**AU: Final words for our readers...what should we know about you and your art?**

CS: I'm always up for a challenge. Your design or mine; I'm just happy to be tattooing.

[tattoosbychad.com/blog/chris-stiles/](http://tattoosbychad.com/blog/chris-stiles/)

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## HEMPOLOGY 101

Interview with Ted Smith

By Ira Hunter

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you best known for?**

Ted Smith: I am the founder of the oldest dispensary in the world, the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club, author of *Hempology 101: The History and Uses of Cannabis Sativa*, publisher of the *Cannabis Digest* newspaper, and I made a short appearance in the movie *Kid Cannabis*.

**AU: How did you first become involved in the legalization movement?**

TS: When I attended my first Hempology 101 meeting in January 1995, it became clear to me how important this plant was and I decided to write the book to help hemp become legal. Being a seventh generation Canadian but the first generation not raised on the farm, I wanted to be an advocate for agricultural communities that had been essentially ripped off by bankers and capitalists.

**AU: Tell us the history of your medical marijuana dispensary.**

TS: I started Hempology 101 in Victoria in September 1995 and started meeting patients

immediately. By January, I got a pager and made some handouts for the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club, and started delivering medicine from the van I lived in, with help from a lady that made cookies, massage oils and salves. In a few months, we got an apartment which we operated from for about five years before getting a store. The store was raided four times in 2002-03, and then our bakery was raided in 2009. We have beaten all 15 trafficking charges laid against me and the staff, including the last battle, which went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada and made extracts like hash, honey oil and cookies legal for patients to use. We have close to 4 000 patients that

use our services and have over 50 food and skin products for various medical uses. We have a safe inhalation room and provide a lot of educational material to our members.

**AU: You have been actively assisting medical patients for years. What are some of the healing factors of THC and CBD that you have witnessed?**

TS: Well, I could tell a lot of stories. What I have seen with the love of my life in the last few years has been nothing short of incredible. She has had cancer for over five years and it has gotten into the bones throughout her body. A year and a half ago, two vertebrae collapsed, as the cancer had eaten them away. We thought she was dying. She could not eat, so getting cannabis oil pills down her throat was not even an option. We started giving her cannabis suppositories, which calmed down the pain enough she could eat one grape at a time, and with that start getting cannabis pills into her. We brought her home to die and as her appetite increased, she took more capsules full of cannabis oils. While she had been using some cannabis before, it was only when we started giving her massive doses that she started to beat the cancer back... While she is still struggling to stay alive, I have no doubt she would have been dead a long time ago if we did not have lots of friends donating cannabis and cannabis oils to

her.

**AU: Briefly let us know about some of the the court battles you have fought and the final results.**

TS: Aside from the VCBC raids, I have also been arrested passing out joints at the University of Victoria, where the UVSS Hempology 101 club has hosted weekly 420 circles since 1998, and for trying to give out 420 pot cookies on International Medical Marijuana Day. Both arrests were back in November 2000. I was convicted of trafficking cannabis for passing out the joints and eventually fined \$500. In the cookie trial, I was found guilty of possession for the purposes of trafficking THC by a jury, and was sentenced to one day in jail, which ended up being around three hours.

**AU: Tell us about your book and group, Hempology 101.**

TS: My book is the most comprehensive story of cannabis written yet. It covers ancient history, hemp, the medical applications of cannabis, the long history of prohibition and the struggle in the last few decades to undermine prohibition. The International Hempology 101 Society is a non-profit based in Victoria, BC that hosts a variety of events, like April 20 at City Hall, and publishes the *Cannabis Digest* newspaper.

**AU: Tell us about the mascot character you dress up as.**

TS: Herb is our big mascot and we love to bring him out to all sorts of events like Earth Day. I will even be wearing him when I run ten kilometers in the Times Colonist 10K this April. He is about 12 feet tall and 8 feet wide, so it is like running with a sail.

**AU: Were you happy when the Liberals ousted Harper? Will pot be legalized under Justin Trudeau?**

TS: Certainly everyone was happy to see Harper gone, but many of us are worried that the new government will be making very strict rules when they legalize cannabis, making it difficult for small businesses to enter into the market.

**AU: Any advice for people looking to join the herbal movement?**

TS: Network. Read. Network. Read. Make sure you do not become partners with the wrong people, as many are just looking to profit and pound their chests.

**AU: We see many medical dispensaries popping up all over the place - do you feel like your long fight has had positive results?**

TS: It is so amazing to see all of these dispensaries popping up; it is a clear sign we are winning.

**AU: What do you see as the ultimate solution to the marijuana laws in Canada?**

TS: Hopefully there will be no unreasonable barriers for someone looking to enter into the industry as a producer or distributor. A flourishing craft cannabis industry would provide a lot of jobs and keep the costs low.

**AU: How will you be celebrating 420 this year?**

TS: I organize the 420 event in Victoria, so I will be on the microphone at 420.

**AU: Favourite herb to smoke?**

TS: Free.

**AU: Final words of weed wisdom?**

TS: Smoke 'em if you got 'em.



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# Sentient

Interview by Mr. Anonymous

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Ranjit Ranawaya: We are Sentient, Edmund Saulnier (Guitar, Vocals); Ranjit Ranawaya (Bass, Vocals); Scott Tanner (Drums). We are infamous for our crushing brand of death/thrash metal, killer live shows and ensuring that heads are banging every time we play.

**AU: Tell us about Sentient! How did you form?**

RR: Sentient initially formed in 2004 and consisted of Edmund, Ranjit and Todd Quinlan, our previous drummer. We began jamming and

drummer, and we began rehearsing and writing new material with him. This has led to our latest creation, *Ceremonial Murder*, which we released in the summer of 2015.

**AU: Do you guys subscribe to any particular genre category? How would you describe your music?**

RR: We categorize ourselves as death/thrash metal, but we incorporate elements from almost all styles of metal. We would describe our music as high-intensity headbanging music, with catchy riffs and the occasional breakdown thrown in for good measure.

**AU: Tell us about your latest release, *Ceremonial Murder*. What was the recording process like? Does it represent an evolution in your sound when compared to your past**

writing material, culminating in two releases, 2006's EP *This Flesh Is Only A Cage*, and 2009's *Brink Of Extinction*. Just before the release of the full length album in 2009, we parted ways with Todd, and through other setbacks did not find a replacement drummer until 2013! Scott Tanner (Ex-Thorazine, Operation Wintermist) contacted us in early 2013 after seeing our posting for a new

**releases?**

RR: The recording process for *Ceremonial Murder* was easy and difficult, all at the same time. By being able to record the album ourselves, we were able to set a comfortable but steady timeline. However, when it came time to mix, master and produce the album, we were on a tight schedule (of our own making) and just got the album printed in time for our CD release show. This album definitely represents an evolution of our sound, with increased emphasis on dual vocals, heavier guitar riffs and increased tempos.

**AU: Do you have any particular influences as a band, musical or otherwise? Are there any particular themes or messages that you explore in your music or lyrics?**

RR: I don't know that we have a specific influence as a band in general. However, what does influence us is each other; each of our three members is deep into their own styles of music, metal or otherwise, and our collaboration brings in elements from those, which are then interpreted through the lens of the group. Our overarching theme could be seen as explorations of human topics, whether they be death, suffering and mayhem, or views into the human psyche.

**AU: That's a sweet apocalyptic sound byte in the track "Sentient Manifesto." How do you guys think the world will end, and where will you be when it does? Which band member would survive the longest?**

RR: I think that, like a lot of bands that have apocalyptic themes, we are more warning people of the dangerous roads humanity can travel, rather being than harbingers of doom. However, if the world continues on a path of environmental and cultural destruction, then certainly we will over-consume our resources and engage in global conflict for the remaining spoils. I hope not to be there if it all comes to this, but if we were, I'd hope to be fighting 'til the end against the greedy and corrupt. I'm sure Edmund would say he would survive longest, and I don't think we could argue

# CALGARY CARNAGE

against that.

**AU: Congratulations on your recent victory at the final round of the Wacken Metal Battle Calgary! How was the battle? There must have been some serious competition...**

RR: The Wacken Battle was once again a great opportunity to showcase our talents against other highly talented local bands. The Battle was hard fought, and neither round was easy, as the other bands we played against were all great. We are really looking forward to the Provincial Battle, and hopefully carrying on to take the fight to Toronto!

**AU: What are your plans for the rest of the year, besides the Wacken Battles? Any tours or recording sessions coming up?**

RR: The rest of this year has turned out to be pretty busy. We will be playing at Loud As Hell Fest in Drumheller in July, and have at least one show a month until and after then, most notably the Friday the 13th Horror Show at Overtime Sports Bar on May 13th, here in Calgary.

We are also going to be working on our latest creation, tentatively titled *Lord of Beasts*. This record will, once again, be self-produced, but with more time allotted for its completion than the last one (we hope!)

**AU: Any final words for the readers of *Absolute Underground*? What should we know about Sentient that we don't already?**

RR: Our final words would be to welcome everyone to the Prairie Final on April 16th, and to check out our website, Facebook and Twitter for all upcoming Sentient news! We leave everything on the stage, so there are no Sentient secrets!

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# Amon Amarth: First Kill

Interview with Olavi Mikkonen  
By Erik Lindholm & Antony Lindholm

Amon Amarth formed in 1992 in Sweden and have since become one of the largest folk metal bands in the world today. Their latest recording, due on March 25th, is *Jomsviking* – a concept story about love and revenge set in the world of mercenary Vikings. The new video, “First Kill,” is out on YouTube, to give listeners a taste!

**AU: Hello out there! What are you up to? Where is home right now?**  
Olavi Mikkonen: That’s Sweden! And I am rehearsing by myself for the upcoming shows. We already did the band rehearsal, so all of us are just refreshing our heads on our own.

**AU: Do you find yourselves working digitally because you live in different areas when you are home?**  
Mikkonen: Definitely, yes. I think the whole writing process on the new album was really digital. It’s been me and Johan Söderberg, our guitar player, and Ted on bass. We all still live

really close to each other, so we like to get together every second week for the album writing and you know, to bounce ideas [and] go through the riffs. For the most part Johan, the singer, and drummer Tobias are involved in the digital way we send files to each other. That’s the way it is now. We have not had a rehearsal place for many years.

**AU: Could you do this with a standard laptop? What kind of gear would you need?**  
OM: Probably a laptop, sure. I just have a regular computer that’s only for music and we are running “Cubased” software. We all have the same program... so when we send [files] back and forth, it is the same. We all have it, and Johan can record vocals at home. For this album, [once] had three or four songs that were done, we rented a place, got together, jammed as a band and nailed down some demos. The writing process has become very digital.

**AU: At the same time, you are using modern digital recording, while tackling some older topic material with the Jomsviking theme. Tell us about how you chose the theme.**  
OM: When *Deceiver* was done and we started talking about what was going to be the next album, it was decided early on that we wanted to try a different approach on the writing. We wanted to imagine we were going to make a movie, instead of an album. So Johan had this idea for *Jomsviking* that he wrote as story, a script. We all felt that it was the right story. We cut it into eleven sections, to be the songs, and next found the right music for the right story piece. We had only the story, with no song lyrics, but we



knew the topic of the story would become the lyrics and made the best out of it. This is the album that we have been sharing ideas and working as a unit the most, I would say.

**AU: Were you pretty stuck on this central theme? Can you explain it for the readers?**  
OM: The Jomsvikings were mercenaries in the Viking era. They were badass soldiers. People could hire them for a raid or to defend a city. Johan wrote a story about this young man that kills a man in the village that he lives in, then he has to flee for his life. When fleeing, he bumps into these Jomsvikings, but he’s a young man so they take him on board and he becomes one of their best and most fearsome Vikings. They do a bunch of raids for many, many years. Then, 20 years later, he gets back to his home shores and he is looking for revenge. So it’s kinda like a movie, the whole idea was to see it as a complete story. I think we had a lot of fun with it. We rented a cabin up north in Sweden in the middle of the woods; there was nothing except for us. Half of the time we jammed and half of the time we brainstormed ideas. It was a fun and different process for us.

**AU: Did you guys also take on some new influences in regards to sound and tone? Did you try out new gear or a new approach?**  
OM: Gear-wise, I think if you’re working with Andy Sneap, there is no need to try to know better than him. He is a fucking monster when it comes to guitar tones, as well as drums, and he’s doing his job as a producer perfectly, so we don’t need to get involved. But when it comes to solo writing, we’ve been talking for years [about] how to get the melodies to stand out more. We have always been a melodic band and we always use twin guitars, but not always do you hear what is going on. That is something we really tried to improve on, in this album. A song like “At Dawn’s First Light,” you have the melody, and we actually add the same melody in higher notes, so it stands out. That is something we haven’t done in the past. With that said, it’s still the same Amon Amarth melodies, but now you can actually hear them much clearer.

**AU: Sometimes in a live environment it’s really hard to make out all the nuances; hopefully, they can be found on studio recordings for the listeners more easily.**  
OM: Yeah, and also on our previous albums, if we played fast, we used really fast alternate picking. When there is a melody, and then you have bass drums as fast as the guitar picking, it’s quite difficult to actually hear what’s going on. We have been trying to make the melodies larger and stand out. [Same with] the vocals... Obviously, we love growling and we’re never gonna change that! We wanted to make them clearer so people can hear it and sing along, and I think we are one of only metal bands with growling vocals that you can actually sing along to.

**AU: Speaking of jamming at a distance, how did you find the recording process for this record? Did you find it different because you had more of a concept going? Or did it flow in a similar nature to previous records?**  
OM: It was quite different because of the concept. When we had the different sections that were going to be the songs all ready, with a few ideas ready. So those ideas were easy to fit into the story. But then we had a lot of cool stuff that did not fit anywhere and we had to start from scratch. For “First Kill,” you need something that feels like a fist in your face! You want this chasing you, like you’re running through the woods! That kind of feeling... We did not have anything like that, so you fucking go back to the drawing desk and start drawing. We had a framework of a story already, and normally we would just jam whatever you jam and it becomes a song. This made it difficult, but also quite fun!

**AU: How the whole auditioning process went to find a new drummer for the album?**  
OM: We never had an audition, we didn’t need to. When we separated with Fredrik, it was two weeks after we started to work on the new album. We wanted to have a drummer as soon as possible in the process. We went with Tobias as he has been our friend forever and he’s an amazing person and drummer, so we took the easy road to have somebody that we already knew. We didn’t want to work with anybody we haven’t worked with before. We haven’t worked with Tobias before, but we at least knew him. He was so positive and so

energetic, with many new ideas because he had a total free hand on the drums. We kinda knew that he was not going to be the permanent solution, but we wanted to make the best album we ever could, and to have auditions with a person we never met didn’t feel right. So right now we actually have another guy who is hopefully going to be the one, and we will take it from there.

**AU: Your band is well known and recognizable with a unique concept. Can you speak to underground metal bands trying to break through and make a name for themselves. What tips could you give to them?**  
OM: That is difficult, but the way we did it in Amon Amarth: we always went our way, we never listened to what other people said to us. Even in the beginning, we did not even send our demos to record labels. The way we saw it, if they want to have us, they should fucking contact us.

Then it took forever, we were the last band from our friends that got signed, and we are the only band still around from our friends. Our career has grown slowly, we did not become famous after one album. We took small steps for each and that’s probably the reason why we all have our feet on the ground and we don’t take things for granted. It is hard work to be at the level we are, and to maintain this level is even harder work. There are thousands of bands that want to take our position, but that’s cool because I like to work hard and I don’t want to relax. When we make a new album and everyone likes it and thinks it’s great, fantastic! But then we have to make an even better one, and the same thing with live shows. We always try to do the best live shows we possibly can. The whole band is like that. What I am trying to say is that for young kids, be yourself do what you wanna do and work hard. The good stuff comes later.

**AU: Well we gotta ask, if you are not on the road what do you find yourself getting up to? What kind of hobbies do you like to do that people might not know about? What other stuff do you guys like to do?**  
OM: I like to fish a lot, I live not that far away from a lake and that’s my hobby. As of right now it’s a lot of PlayStation, so it’s PlayStation or fishing. [laughs]

**AU: What kind of fish do you aim for?**  
OM: In the lake I don’t really have many options, there are just small perch or pike.

**AU: What about PlayStation, is there a good game that you have on the go?**  
OM: Oh yeah, *Fallout 4*, I love it! And now, I just jumped into the new *Far Cry Primal*. It’s kinda cool. Fucking stone age running around with a bat, knocking animals! Yeah I fucking love it, especially when we’re home for longer periods I’m so into the games.

**AU: You guys are ten albums in, with no sign of stopping. What do you think is next?**  
OM: I don’t know. The main thing is we still maintain really good friends within the band. We all really enjoy working together and we have fun. Even on tours, we hang out a lot on the days off. That’s our secret, well, maybe not a secret, yet that is why things are going well for us. We really enjoy it. If we still maintain friendships, I don’t see a reason to not continue.

The approach for *Jomsviking*, that may be something we might look into the future and find different working approaches like we did with this one. I am excited we have some ideas that are being thrown back and forth. For now, we are gonna tour the album and take it from there.

**AU: Last words to metalheads in Canada who are watching the Vikings TV show and are ready to come to your show and wreck shit.**  
OM: Yeah? They should actually watch this other show, *The Last Kingdom* on BBC, made by the English. It’s very amazing. *Vikings* is amazing, too. Seriously though, we are looking forward to hit Canada again, Canada has always been amazing for us, and yeah, can’t fucking wait to come up there and play the new stuff for you guys!

<http://www.amonamarth.com>

PHOTO SOURCE: [metalblade.com](http://metalblade.com)





ShrEdmonton  
Metal Festival &  
Conference

Interview with organizer Tyson Travnik  
By Lacey Paige

**Absolute Underground:** You had been organizing Alberta's premiere outdoor metal festival, Farmageddon, since 2013. Is ShrEdmonton meant to be an extension of that or will it be a whole different beast of its own?

Tyson Travnik: ShrEdmonton is a sister festival of Farmageddon. It's basically a complete 180-degree flip, as far as the flavour that we're going to offer. With Farmageddon being an open-air, this one is going to be a multi-venue festival with two different rooms on two different floors, operating at the same time. [It] caters to people within the city that don't necessarily want to camp at an open-air.

**AU:** Why the decision to put Farmageddon on the backburner until 2017?

TT: The biggest thing was just financial struggle. We want to keep it going, but frankly the Western Canadian scene just isn't big enough to help fund the cost of an open-air. So we need to find a way to be able to raise funding through other ventures, including something like an indoor festival, and use that to help push the open-air and hopefully attract people from outside Western Canada to attend these festivals.

**AU:** ShrEdmonton's inaugural lineup boasts an array of Canadian bands that spans the gamut of metal. How did you go about selecting the bands that are playing?

TT: I actually hand-selected bands that I think, from personal experience, really helped push the local scene in the last few years—just bands that really deserve that break. It doesn't matter if they're the biggest-drawing band or not, but if you've seen them turn out product and do their best to support the community, those are the bands that I'd like to give the opportunity to play the festival. We tried not to book too many of the bands that played at Farmageddon over the last year or two.

**AU:** Also new to the Edmonton metal festival landscape is the integration of the conference. What can you say about that particular aspect of ShrEdmonton?

TT: The conference was somewhat of an influence from the late Noctis festival. I went to Noctis the two years in the row that they had the conference, specifically for the conference. I didn't even bother going to the shows. Each year there were tons of really cool ideas. So I tried to take that influence and do a conference up here with the ultimate goal of trying to break down some of the misconceptions about various parts of the industry, whether it's what promoters actually do versus what bands think they do, why venues charge what they charge, and all that kind of stuff. Basically the number one goal is to try to open everyone's eyes to the different aspects of the industry.

**AU:** Special panel guests include Tim Waterson, Glen Fricker, Jon Asher, and more. How did you go about selecting the special guests that will be speaking at the conference? What made these particular people stand out above other candidates that may have been chosen for the conference?

TT: When you look at how much reach guys like Glen Fricker and Jon Asher and those guys have, I think they're relatable to a larger amount of people, versus someone who may be a great drummer from a band, but may not be as recognizable. As for Tim Waterson, we're bringing him out—obviously he's a local so that saves us some travel costs—but he's also a record-holding double bass player, and he has a reputation for being a great instructor. So the logistics of that just work out absolutely perfectly. As far as the other people in the conference, they're mostly people within the Western Canadian scene that are iconic and are recognizable names within their areas of the industry.

**AU:** ShrEdmonton is also occurring in conjunction with the 2016 Metal Alliance Tour, featuring Dying Fetus, Jungle Rot, Black Crown Initiate, and other veteran metal acts. How do you think the incorporation of this tour into ShrEdmonton will alter the overall dynamic of the festival?

TT: It works out because it's the only Western Canadian date—outside of Regina, I believe—that you'll have a chance to see them. We wanted

to do a third day, but trying to bring people out on a Sunday is obviously tough, even if it is in the middle of the city, versus somewhere out in the bush. Having a hard-hitting bill like that should help, especially with it being an earlier-starting show.

**AU:** Aside from the conference aspect of ShrEdmonton, what else sets it apart and makes it unique from other festivals of the same ilk?

TT: Obviously besides the conference, the fact that it's two venues within the same building at the same time kind of makes it really easy because you can actually see all the bands at the festival. The sets will be staggered, so that you can



-CORRECTION-

In the previous issue, AU68 (Feb/March), we omitted photo credits from several of the photos included in the collage of our Lemmy Tribute. Our sincerest apologies to Mr. Kyle Harcott for the oversight, along with many thanks for generously contributing his photos to the original piece.

the festivals, and to instill that it's important that the word is spread about things like all these metal festivals in Western Canada happening, because without the people going to these festivals, we can only do it for so long!

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## BC CannaConference

Interview by Iree-I

### Absolute Underground: Tell us about the event you have planned.

Matt Laundrie: With the election of the Liberal government, in addition to medical marijuana being licensed in Canada for years, the doors to legalization of recreational marijuana are opening. With advances in "licensed and regulated" medical marijuana, extracts & oils, the Canadian cannabis industry professionals, commercial producers, researchers, laboratories, are achieving significant results in all areas, including cultivation of high-CBD medical strains and pharmaceutical products.

The legal Canadian medical businesses "still in infancy" are at the frontier, and ready to reach new heights. Canada has always been a pioneer in the global market for medical marijuana and, at the same time, industry professionals have a lot to learn as we transform into this new era of legalization of medical and now soon-to-be recreational marijuana.

This fall, the BC CannaConference will be held in Victoria. It will be a two-day conference and trade show that will feature some of the leading professionals in the medical marijuana industry,

including doctors, lawyers, investment groups, licensed producers, insurance companies, service industries, health care practitioners and many more. It will be a great place for new patients to explore and learn about medicinal knowledge, and meeting grounds for entrepreneurs who are interested in getting a job in the legal marijuana industry. BC CannaConference will feature 150 exhibitors and vendors who provide some service or product that is industry-related, from medical clinics, dispensaries, nutrient companies, licensed producers, dispensaries, stock market and various investment groups to security companies, insurance companies, industry products, non-profit groups and many more. It will also feature over 25 educational sessions and workshops. BC CannaConference is dedicated to developing a meeting ground where professionals can create life-long partnerships which will evolve into an emerging cannabis industry.

The BC CannaConference welcomes industry professionals worldwide, from the US, Europe and abroad, to meet us in the capital of British Columbia, Victoria, this fall.

### AU: What made you want to organize this event?

ML: I've always taken a proactive stance on medical marijuana, and was involved with Proposition 215 in California back in 1996 when I was 18 years old. I believe cannabis and hemp can change the world we live in with a very positive impact that is good for health and good for the economy. It works in other countries, other states in the US, and all around the world. We are now entering a time where cannabis will be treated like alcohol, and also like aspirin, it's medicine for the mind and the body. I want to create a conference where industry professionals can educate others about the subject and give interested people a place to explore and learn. The cannabis and hemp industry is really the new gold rush, and if you get involved now and specialize in something, you will go far. There's so much opportunity in this industry and this conference is a good place to see how many are succeeding in it and how they can get involved as well.

### AU: I understand you want to bring in some people from the States to speak as guest... any other special guests planned?

LM: Yes, I'm hoping to get Dennis Peron, Steve DeAngelo, Tommy Chong, Ed Rosenthal, and many others in the professions, like the leading doctors, medical clinics, investment groups, security companies, soil companies, insurance companies and many other companies related to the cannabis industry.

### AU: What sorts of things will people be able to learn at this symposium?

LM: They will learn how many niches there are to fill in the cannabis industry... Not just in product placement, but in providing services for people. They can learn how so many people with so many products and services are becoming successful and that there's maybe a niche that is untapped. There are lots of voids to fill when it comes to medical marijuana, but with the recreational marijuana laws soon to be in place, there's even more opportunity, like there is in Colorado, Washington and other states in the US. There's a domino effect happening, not only in the States or North America, but globally. There will be many speakers at the conference talking about the clinical side of cannabis, with in-depth discussions on CBDs and other cannabinoids. Investment companies in the marijuana companies will be there. Health insurance companies who insure medical marijuana dispensaries will be there. Security companies who provide security for licensed facilities will be there. Everyone in the cannabis industry will there, and it will provide a place for these companies to network with each other and to network to the general public.

### AU: When and where will this all be taking place?

LM: We are now shooting for November 2016

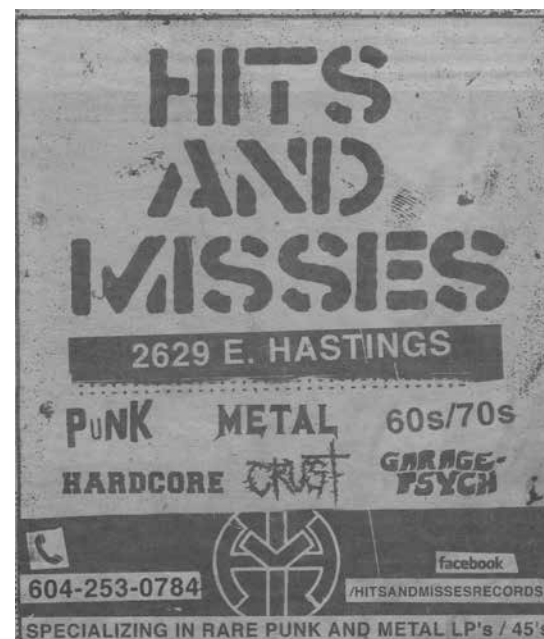
### AU: What are your 420 plans?

LM: I will be going over to Vancouver's 420 with a good friend.

### AU: Anything else you would like to mention?

LM: Yes. I'm going to dedicate this first year's conference to Ted Smith. If it wasn't for him paving the way with all of his struggles, the world would be a different place. Ted Smith, founder of the Cannabis Buyers Club in Victoria, is the pioneer and a true crusader in this whole movement.

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# MODIFIED GHOST

## Modified Ghost Festival

By AU Editorial

This year marks the inaugural installation of the Modified Ghost Festival in Vancouver, BC. The four-day festival takes place across multiple venues between April 7th – 10th, and features some staggering visiting acts, including Suffocation, Dillinger Escape Plan, Absu, Misery Index, Job For A Cowboy, Cattle Decapitation, Power Trip, Cult Leader, Gorod, and many more. Absolute Underground caught up with the mastermind behind the Modified Ghost promotion company, Jason Puder, for some further details on the fest.

**Absolute Underground:**  
**Hey Jason! Give us some background on the promotion company Modified Ghost... how did it start, how's the last year been treating you?**

Jason Puder: This past year has been great! The first official Modified Ghost show was on September 2nd, 2015, and things have been going well so far!

**AU: Tell us about the Modified Ghost Festival! This is the first year, is that correct? How did it all come about?**

JP: Yes, this is the first year! I've wanted to be a part of a music festival since I got into promoting. I started talking to different artists about the idea, and I also reached out to various mentors and peers for their assistance in making things happen.

**AU: How about the bands... are they all Canadian? Mostly touring, or are there some local guys in there?**

JP: The bands are not all Canadian, there is a mix of bands and performers from all over. Some of the bands are playing a one-off show, some had tours coming through Vancouver at the time, and there are some locals being featured, as well.

**AU: For those that are unfamiliar, what will the structure of the festival be like? Will it take place at multiple venues across Vancouver? What options for passes are there?**

JP: The Modified Ghost Festival will be featuring live music, and is taking place at several venues in Vancouver. There are festival passes available, passes available for April 9th, which features staggered sets at two venues, and tickets for

hardcore... all kinds of stuff! I think the ever-growing fanbase that supports these styles of music and performers deserves an annual festival on the West Coast of Canada, one that works hard to make something really special happen every year. I hope people discover that these kinds of events really are special. An annual event that features a huge group of world touring performers doesn't happen everywhere, but some really cool things have started to happen in this city over the last couple of years.

**AU: How does it feel to be booking such large names at such a relatively early stage in the company's career? What's the learning curve been like for you as a promoter since you started the company?**

JP: Great! This festival has been huge learning curve, but working with bigger-name bands and agencies has taken years of hard work. I got into promoting through playing music and booking shows for bands I was in. The first few years of playing local gigs around town was an inspiring time for me, and I had always aspired to be a part of awesome shows. I was fascinated by pretty much everything that went into putting on shows in the different bars I was playing, and one thing just sort of led to another.

**AU: What does the future hold for this fest – you intend to make it an annual event? Any long-term goals for it?**

JP: More great shows, more great bands!

*The Modified Ghost Festival will take place April 7th - 10th in Vancouver, BC at the following venues:*

**April 7th:**

The Biltmore Cabaret - Misery Index / Allegaeon / Baptists / Theories / Acquitted

**April 8th:** The Vogue Theatre - The Dillinger Escape Plan / Job For A Cowboy / Revocation / Gorod / Bookakee (All Ages)

**April 9th:**

The Rickshaw Theatre - Suffocation / Cattle Decapitation / Dead Cross / Toxic Holocaust / Intronaut / Scale the Summit

The Astoria - Power Trip / Cult Leader / Ancients / Usnea / North / He Whose Ox Is Gored

**April 10th:** ABSU / Uada / Graveolence

*Tickets are available at Neptoon Records, Red Cat Records, or at ticketfly.com*

<http://www.modifiedghost.com>





## Devil In The Wood Shack

Interview by Erik Lindholm

**Absolute Underground: Greetings, devils! Who are we speaking with, and can you set the scene of where you are at this very moment to aid the imagination of the reader?**

Thalia: You are speaking with Conrad, Joshua, Justine and I. We're relaxing in our cozy wooden living room. Ambient lighting, amps and instruments are strewn throughout it.

**AU: Where is your "wood shack," your practice zone? Describe where the music comes from.**

Josh: A dark, wooded, overgrown place in our collective heads... But actually our house/jam space. The music comes from struggle, loss, love, depression, and overcoming it all. Mental and physical challenge is no stranger at the devil's door.

**AU: You're from St. Catherines, Ontario**

**originally and now fighting out of East Vancouver. Can you tell us how the band got started and found your sound?**

Josh: I was living on the side of a mountain in Alberta spending most of my time yelling at trees and drinking too much. It gave me the perfect balance of loneliness and freedom to really

find myself and the style of playing that I connect to. I moved back to St. Kitts and started jamming with Wes. Somehow, we ended up out here where we found our family.

**AU: Your debut record is self-titled and releasing any day now. What have you learned from making this record?**

Josh: Definitely broadened our list of "do's" and "don'ts." This LP has raised the bar for all of us, and it feels like it's just the beginning.

**AU: What's the essence of your band for the new listener. Our musical brains are a house party; when you show up, what do you bring?**

Josh: Anthems for weirdos, cooked and ready to serve.

Conrad: Tequila! The best and worst of us, all wrapped up in a confusingly pleasant package. No apology.

**AU: What do you enjoy outside of music? Your photos have guns, drinks, cards, and frankly look like a superb Friday night.**

Josh: Music is a massive part of my life, it's hard to see outside it. It's funny, 'cause without it, I'd

be the greatest housewife!! love cooking and gardening, and just being in my creative space, and for work these days, I transport dead bodies. Conrad: Backyard fires, home-cooked meals and juggling knives. But really, if you're outside of the music, you're lost. Turn around and go home, you silly drunk.

**AU: Influences... one could hear Tom Waits, gutter punk, barroom ballads coming through in your sound. What is found on your current playlist?**

Josh: With all the incredible music my friends are constantly creating around me, I honestly don't need much more... Lately I've been into classical music, I did have a Tom Waits phase, which I still visit now and then. But what really got it going, back in my early days, was playing in a couple punk bands in St. Kitts. I was really cutting my teeth on some sort of angry freedom that just felt amazing. Listening to a lot of bands like the Oi Scouts, A Global Threat, The Unseen and Operation Ivy.

Justine: My musical influences aren't something that I can easily pin down. My parents raised me on such a wide variety of music, and I've naturally kept through with that approach, so I tend to like whatever just jives well with me, not necessarily a specific genre. I come from a classical music background, so I have that prevalence in my playing, and we definitely have a folk influence in the band.

Conrad: Maybe I'm lucky, maybe lazy. But almost all the music I listen to comes more or less from our neighbourhood. The Still Spirits, The Rebel Spell, High Society, The Burying Ground, Red Haven, Colby Morgan and the Catastrophes, Jeff Andrew... the list of great local music in Van goes on and on.

**AU: Most rowdy live show you've played so far, tell us a tale.**

Thalia: We've played a lot of rowdy shows, but one that sticks out to me was from our earlier

## VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

days. It was at The Woods Studio in Vancouver. All I remember is a sea of faces and colliding bodies, wailing, stomping, shouting to the loudest degree. I remember hilarious abusive banter between us and the audience, flasks, mickeys and bottles of whiskey thrown around from one drunken hand to the next, I remember pouring liquor down the throats of my fellow comrades whose hands were busy keeping the crowd alive. There's no real stage at The Woods, so the dance floor melted into our playing area. It felt like we were tormenting a beast.

**AU: What's the most meaningful song on the new record for you, and why?**

Josh: "Weirdo" is one that touches furthest back to my childhood... growing up without music, TV, Christmas, or anything else the "normal kids" seemed to have, just pushed me harder to create my own world.

Justine: "Into The Woods," because that's the first one I really jammed on with the band.

**AU: Touring plans in June 2016 take you across Canada. Tell us of your aims for this trip.**

Josh: Make it back alive to start recording our next record.

**AU: Last words to the faithful rock n' roll people?**

Thalia: Do what makes you hurt, laugh, and love the most. Indulge in all your wild, crazy emotions.

Josh: And be good to your neighbour, goddamnit!

[devilinthewoodshack.com/](http://devilinthewoodshack.com/)

PHOTO CREDIT: [devilinthewoodshack.com](http://devilinthewoodshack.com)



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## Dayglo Abortions

Interview by Erik & Ira

**Absolute Underground: No album in a dozen years and now a freshie! What gives, what is happening with the band, what inspired you to write a new record?**

The Cretin: I actually have a ton of excuses (other than we smoke too much dope) for the long delay between albums. After *Holy Shiite* came out in 2004, I wanted to make an album of love songs. I had a collection of very funny songs, and an extremely controversial cover in mind, but couldn't convince anyone with cash to help me make it. Then, I suppose you could blame the rather drawn-out process of replacing Jesus Bonehead with Blind Marc on drums for about five years of treading water. This ended up being one of the biggest changes that the band has gone through, because Bonehead was not only the drummer, he was essentially the bands manager, and also the closest thing we had to a label at the time, as well. Once that was all fixed up and we had the support of Unrest Records

established, I started trying to sell them on the idea of the *Armageddon Survival Guide*. That was sometime around 2011, at least six months or a year before *Armageddon* was actually due, but I'm guessing that Unrest had just shelled out a fair bit of loot to release our entire back catalog on vinyl, and were hoping to see some return from their investment before they spent any more. Then, sometime in 2013, I came up with the brilliant concept album to be called *Kill Stephen Harper*. When I approached Unrest with that one, they responded with... (and this is a direct quote), "WHAT THE FUCK? ARE YOU COMPLETELY FUCKING INSANE? HOW THE FUCK DO YOU THINK WE COULD SELL A RECORD LIKE THAT? GET FUCKING SERIOUS." Then, a few days later, they got back to me and said, "Hey Murray,

we've been thinking, that idea you had about the *Armageddon Survival Guide* was kind of cool. Let's go with that one." Well shit, I'd already turfed those tunes and gone on, but I figured, if that is what thou wants, oh almighty corporate masters, then that is what I, your humble servant, shall maketh for you. So I did what I always do when asked to produce, scoffed a few forgotten about riffs from my dusty old record collection then dressed them up my usual shitty unintelligible lyrics. To really make this one a winner, I phoned up Mike Jak and talked him into sharing the guitar duties with me (that way it would sound like there

**places in the States as well? Did you finally get your travel waivers after taking a wrong turn in Albuquerque a few years ago?**

C: The first and probably one of the more important things for us to do is get back into the States. With the aid of a lawyer, lots of explaining, and a substantial amount of American funds, we have managed to book a handful of shows down the West Coast, culminating in Las Vegas at Punk Rock Bowling. This is a big test for us, and if we pass it, we will immediately start booking a coast-to-coast tour of America for the fall. We are hoping to just squeak in before the wall that

Donald Trump is hoping to build goes up. (I am confident that by the end of our tour, though hopefully not in the middle of it, this time, the American authorities will have no reservations temporarily opening up the wall to let us back out again) In the meantime though, we are going to be working the shit out of our vast, but predominantly uninhabited land.

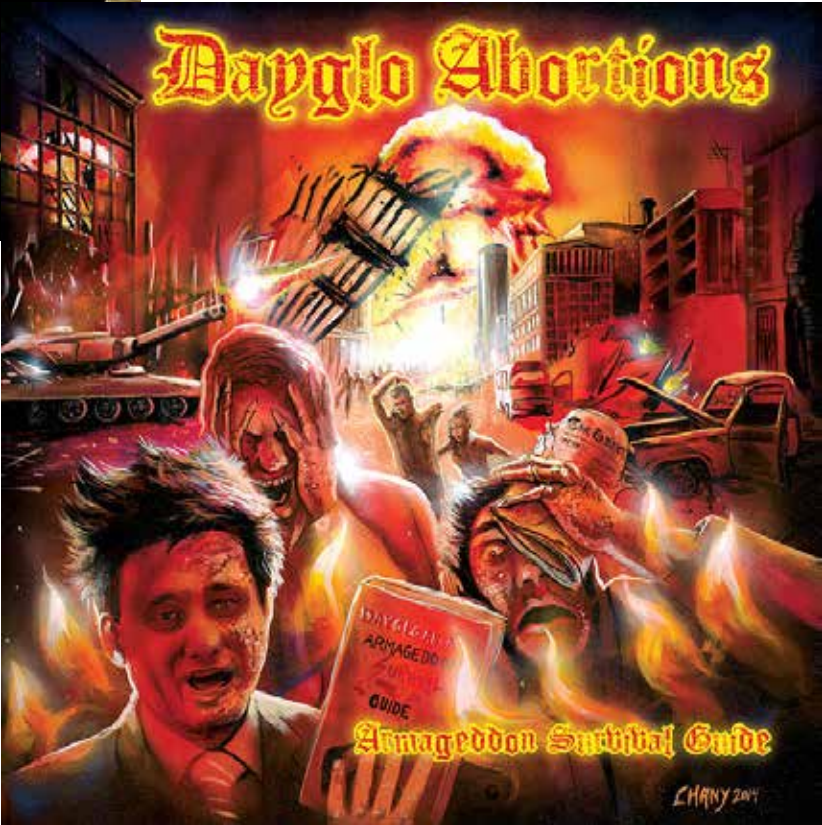
**AU: What is the shittiest club to play in Canada? Surely you have played some treats over the years.**

C: It is our desire to cover every inch of [Canada], which means we'll be hitting the main attractions (all five of them), as well as some of the least-traveled, backwoods shit-holes to ever mark a map. I think it best not to name these places right now, because they make up the rest of the eight or ten possible places to play in Canada... Okay, don't get your knickers all bunched up, I'm just kidding about that.

Canada is not only vast, but it is a profoundly beautiful and diverse country. I know I speak for the entire band on this one, we consider the Canadian punk/metal scene to be our family, and we like nothing more than to get out there and bum drinks and smokes and the occasional hug off our friends and family. I, or I should say we, will see you all soon. Cheers!

<http://thedaygloabortions.com>

PHOTO CREDIT: Kevin Eisenlord



was at least one competent musician playing on the album). So that's about where we sit today. We have an album that looks and sounds like a million bucks, thanks mainly to the production efforts of Rob "Chicken" Shallcross, and the original cover art by the dude from the Montreal band Inepsy, whose name I just can't think of right now. We have the support of Unrest Records, and shiny new, highly motivated management, and the burning desire to get out on the road.

**AU: The Dayglos are playing Punk Rock Bowling in Las Vegas with D.O.A. this year, are you stoked? Will Dayglos be touring other**



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# Cryptopsy

Interview with Flo Mounier  
By Lacey Paige

**AU:** You've been with Cryptopsy almost since the band's very inception back in the early 90s. Can you take a moment to reflect on the last 20+ years? How would you summarize your time with the band?

Flo Mounier: Haha, that's a very long and complicated answer, one which I'd have trouble remembering a lot of. All I can say is that there have been lots of ups and downs, lots of people come and gone. All in all though, for me, it has been a learning and growing experience that has led me to where I want to be and doing what I want to do.

**AU:** You've managed to endure several drastic lineup changes over the years. Was there ever a time when you considered stepping away to pursue other things; if so, what compelled you to stick with Cryptopsy?

FM: Yes I must admit that at one point it was getting out of hand, but new members pulled me back into the fold and said there was much more to do. At the same time, I knew that doing something else was not an option. I enjoy creating and playing with Cryptopsy, and that won't change.

**AU:** Cryptopsy's 20-year discography boasts seven very unique studio albums that are all solid in their own right, yet only one EP—which was released just last year. Why the decision to change things up and release *The Book of Suffering* as two EPs instead of another full-track studio album?

FM: The EP is meant to be the first in a series of three. We also wanted to put out music at a faster pace than in the past. It felt to us that producing four songs per year was more natural... Who knows what the future holds?

**AU:** I noticed that on *The Book of Suffering Tome 1*, you seem to have replaced your signature snare pang with a cleaner, more contemporary tone that is much less reminiscent of early-era Cryptopsy and more "in-tune" with the duller, less prominent snare tone that is prevalent in current metal drumming trends. Can you elaborate on this?

FM: Well there I have to disagree. I actually fought so that the snare would remain as natural as possible on this release, and the complaint of my guitar player/producer Chris is that he likes fatter snare sounds. Mine is cranked high and that's the

way I like it and want to hear it.

**AU:** If there's one thing that Cryptopsy/Flo Mounier fans can attest to, it's the fact that your speed and technical proficiency seem to never to stop improving. What exercises, techniques, etc. do you use to continuously improve in these areas?

FM: Well I've based a lot of my improvements on the natural use of body motion and musculature. So instead of trying to figure out all sorts of different modern techniques, I train my muscles accordingly to make it all easier. It's worked for me, and I do teach this in my lessons.

**AU:** How has your kit setup and overall style changed since you first started with Cryptopsy in the early 90s?


FM: The kit has really been

reduced in size. I find that the less pieces I have, the less distractions there are. Therefore I can really concentrate on the beat and groove. My

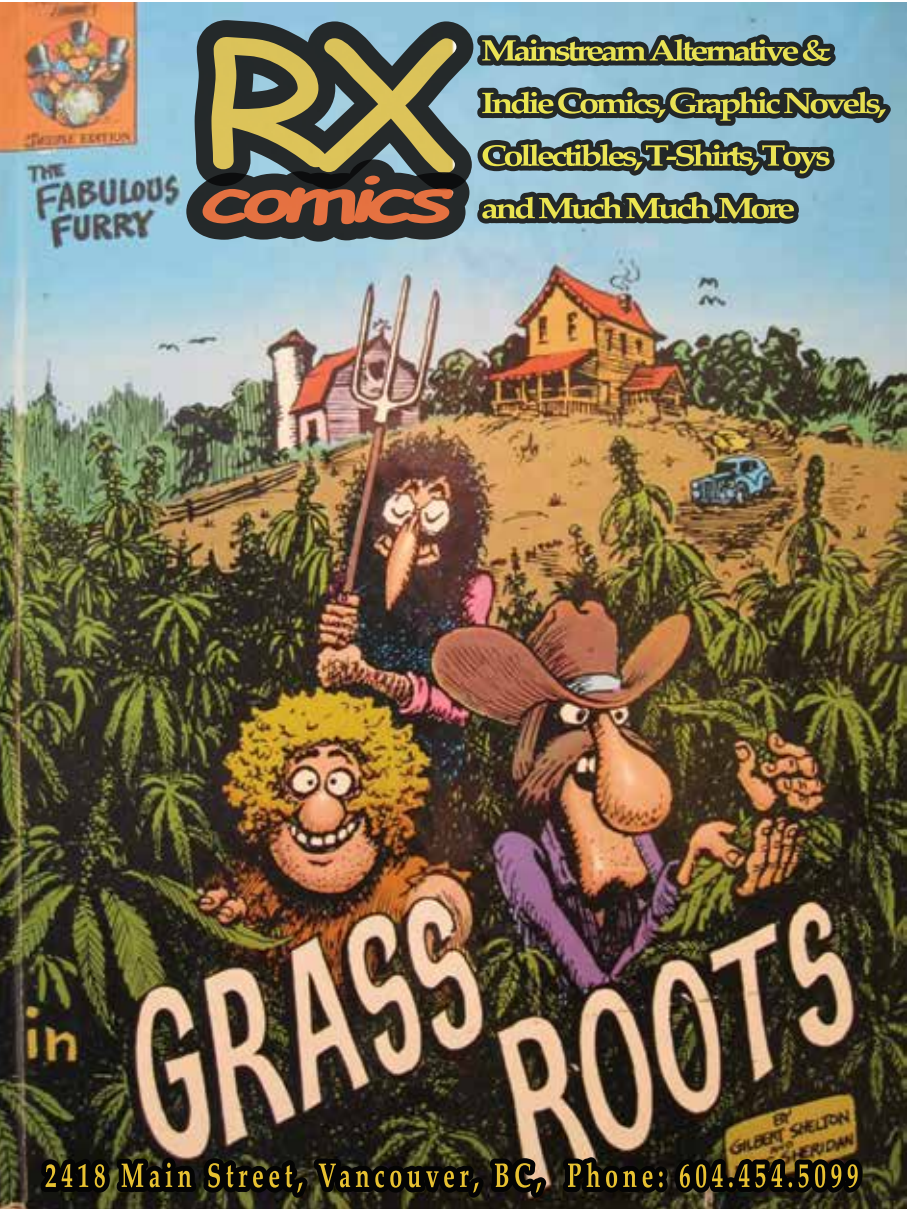
style used to be a lot more forced and nervy, now it's powerful, relaxed and more precise.

**AU:** You guys are currently touring North America with undoubtedly two of the most monumental bands in the history of death metal, Cannibal Corpse and Obituary. How is the tour going so far, and how do you feel about sharing the stage with such heavy-hitting death metal veterans?

FM: It's just amazing, and a total honour! I grew up listening to these guys



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and being influenced by them. They are super cool, and we get along just fine. Tour is huge and almost sold out to sold out every night. It's a blessing really!

**AU:** What can Cryptopsy fans expect from *The Book of Suffering Tome 2*? When will it be released?

FM: We're trying for the end of 2016. Ummm, so far we have one song done and it's just silly... Expect Cryptopsy with some never-before-explored territory.

**AU:** Is there anything else you would like to

share with *Absolute Underground* readers?

FM: Thank you all so much for your years of support! Buy your music, support the underground!

<http://www.cryptopsy.ca/>

PHOTO CREDIT: Eric Sanchez Photography



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# Absolute Album Reviews

## Rhine - An Outsider Self-Released

On this second album from the Seattle band Rhine, there are a multitude of sounds and feelings that soar through each song. Thoughts of iciness permeate every track, due to the bare skeletal feel brought on by a very nimble musicianship. I particularly love how all this is then slammed aside when the full instrumentation jams back in, raising the shit-kicking dynamic to a most awesome level. Gabriel Tachell, whose use of the many progressive metal elements is impressively demonstrated, handles all the instrumentation, with the exception of drums. Pretty much all the songs are over five minutes, with a couple clocking in at over ten minutes, so expect a heavy listening experience.

A lot of the record reminds me of early Devin Townsend and his schizoid vocalizations. The shifting design of death metal and blistered Norwegian metal extremes really show an allegiance to pushing the boundaries of the heavy genre, while some of the clean tone stuff is just as good and downright paganesque, bringing to mind Earth's more psychedelic and peaceful work. "Paralyzed" has a beastly tempo and a whimsical approach that, for me, makes it the most solidly interesting track on the album. This song has converging chord structures that really up the complexity level and a cool wah-wah lead guitar that paints an image of Kirk Hammett playing for Type O Negative, just before the "Opethness" commences.

-Dan Potter

## Sanktuary - Winter's Doom Self-Released

When I think of the Canadian north, I think no-bullshit attitudes and hard music for an inhospitable climate. But just because these guys live where Satan Claus resides doesn't necessarily mean all their songs are going to be about the cold white stuff that endlessly falls from the sky up in the Yukon. On their shit-kicking new album, Sanktuary take on more than just a winter wonderland; they're dealing with the hardest stuff around, like vile propaganda machines that control the masses, police state excesses and corpses being reborn to terrorize the living.

"Space Race" is a great album opener; its back-to-the-basics metal is super authentic. These guys clearly love Iron Maiden and other NWOBHM groups that defined the beginnings of what we know as modern metal. That drum kit sound is really dry, making for an awesome classic rock vibe that anchors the whole album and keeps it from getting too fake. The guitars keep in your face with a generous overdrive tone, nothing too fancy, just what Angus Young would want, while the guitar players put on a shredfest like no other, to say the least. I love how the wailing vocalist uses a higher-pitched scream to accentuate certain lyrical passages, keeping things very intense.

To show they really do respect true metal of old, the title track, "Winter's Doom," plows your face in with some "Reigning Blood"-proof, shit-kicking hard stuff. The integrity level runs high, along with a very refined approach, minus the genre mixing, just full-on leather jacket, converse shoes, and denim-wearing heshher music.

-Dan Potter

## Striker- Stand in the Fire Record Breaking Records

These guys are a well-established act, and this album marks their sixth release as a band. It demonstrates all the musical traits of top metal acts being honored, from the melodic sensibility of 80s metal back in its heyday to its crunch and extremist-obsessed current incantations. The band is described as playing a sub-genre called power thrash; each song is super intense, with soaring vocals and expert musicianship, nailing every complex swerve that this heavy genre of music has accumulated over forty years.

One of the many highlights is the track "Too Late," which has a late Van Halen vibe going on, or even a Drag-onforce feel, due to the awesome power chorus that Bon Jovi wished he'd had written. "United" gets all "G'n R" on you, with whiskey-soaked guitar riffs that recall somewhere much warmer than Striker's hometown of Alberta, Canada. That "Sunset Strip" vibe rears its head from time to time, but there is mostly a clinic on the really hard stuff being taught on this record.

Whether it's the superb, muscular drum fills, or the total knowledge of guitar shred secrets, topped off with some really great tunes sung with passion, Striker has proven they are masters of their habitat. Now they will focus on invading and conquering yours.

-Dan Potter

## Necronomicon - Advent of The Human God Season of Mist

Slinging heaviness is what blackened death metal groups do best, and this Quebec-based unit

is certainly no exception. Intense guitar and drum performances that pack an old-school death metal punch act as a backdrop for the widescreen symphonic elements that immediately bring to mind the maestro Beethoven, conducting a ghoulish orchestra after consuming several energy drinks. With its 50% classical symphony, and 50% metal band aesthetic, this release reminds listeners how classically influenced heavy metal can be.

The band's corpse paint-wearing image really fits the music, particularly the vocals, which sound like they truly emanate from a Viking, serving two tours on a conquer-and-pillage expedition. The drums crash like Nordic avalanches on tracks like "Alchemy of the Avatar." With its blazing, jugular-seeking guitar riffs and crazed piano breaks over top double kick drum insanity, this last song makes for a perfect ending to a blistering listen.

-Dan Potter

## Devil In The Woodshack - Self-Titled Self-Released

East Van rockabilly folk... it is found here! Musicians and artists could widely be understood as a filter for their environments. Here, in their debut LP, the Devils pour their observations of a gritty, passionate life lived into a audio cocktail that goes down smooth and leaves you intoxicated. The band has a wide variety of flavors with which to lay out the stories: cello, trumpet, piano, banjo - alongside standard rock weapons such as distorted guitars and hammering drums. Graceful female vocals meet gruff male presence to provide a complex interplay; especially notable on songs containing a back-and-forth between two characters demanding forgiveness and exchanging blame ("Two Whores"). Songs range from upbeat rockabilly smasher ("Devil Does Do") to hip-swaying mysterious vamp ("No Condition"). This interplay and diversity of flavours leaves the band much sonic room to explore; they can be overwhelmingly joyous with anthemic choruses, or down-in-the-dumps with slow piano and moans of loss. This freedom of themes, tempos and voices gives a wide ranging listening experience. This is also



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seen in their wild live shows, should you choose to attend. Recommended listening if you want to break out of the musical domestic beer norms and experience a one-off cocktail which may cause hallucinations, as poured by a winking, tattooed bartender.

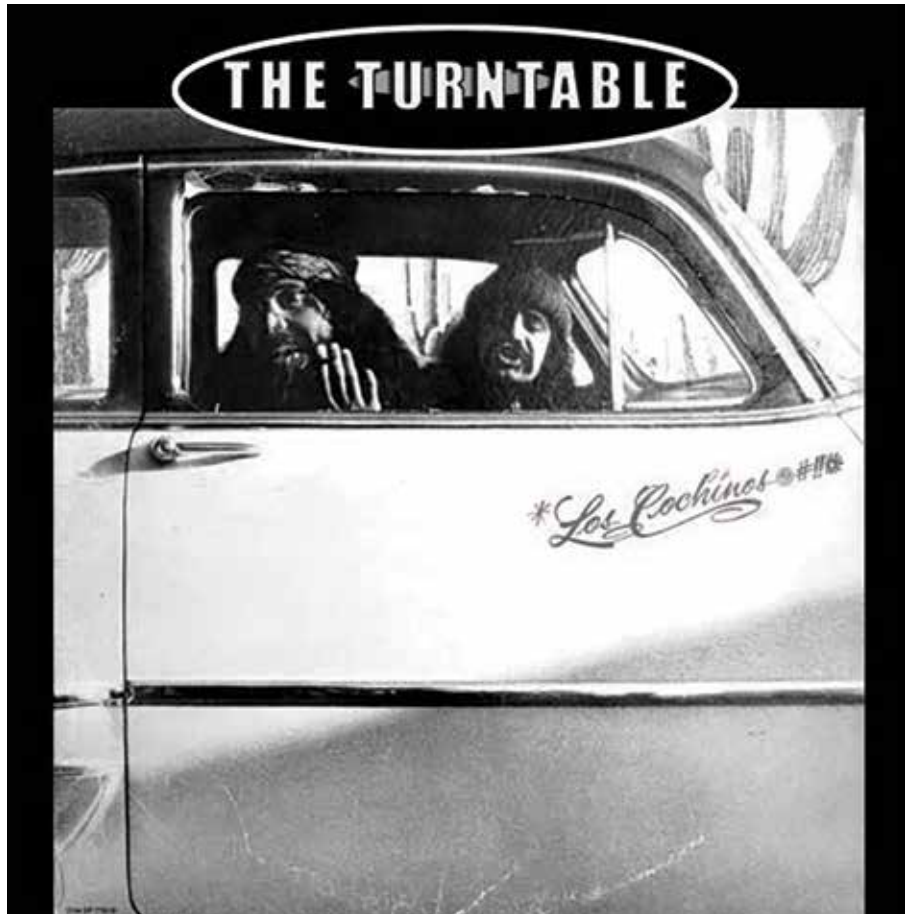
-Erik Lindholm

## Dayglo Abortions - Armageddon Survival Guide Unrest Records

Finally, after a 12-year delay between albums, The Dayglo Abortions come out of hiding with a new release on Unrest Records. This album kicks in your ear drums right from the start. The Cretin and co. have definitely not lost their edge, and have picked up right where *Holy Shiite* left off. Stand-out tracks in-

clude "Cockroaches," "Velcro Shoes," "Sick of the Lies," "They Hate Me," "The Dishwasher," and "Left Handed Nazis." This is an album for fans of the *Two Dogs/Guano* era, for sure. If I have to wait another 12 years for the next Dayglos album, I will gladly do so. This has not left my CD player since I got my hands on it.

-Dave Plow



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## Sick Of It All

Interview by Stepan Soroka

New York City's Sick of it All have been playing raw, aggressive, spirited hardcore punk since 1986. For those as mathematically challenged as I am: that's 30 fuckin' years! Over that time, the band has never slowed down, sold out or compromised their sound or their politics. Equally as impressive, Sick of it All still features three of four original members, and has had the same line-up since 1993. They released their tenth full-length album, *Last Act of Defiance* in 2014 on Century Media Records, and are about to hit the road for a headlining US tour. I caught up with founding guitarist Pete Koller over the phone from his home in Florida to discuss the band's journey, from playing Sunday matinees at CBGB's to headlining festivals for tens of thousands of fans, and everything in between.

**Absolute Underground: Congratulations on 30 years. When you started Sick of it All, did you ever think that the band would be around 30 years later?**

Pete Koller: We never set any goals for the band. We just loved to play. So we just kept playing, and more and more people wanted to see us play. Our first show was in Long Island in New York, and then we played CBGB's, and that was the greatest thing ever. After that it was, "Well, someone wants us to play in Boston," and then it just snowballed from there, and became a 30 year career [laughs].

**AU: Can you tell us a little about what was so special about CBGB's?**

PK: If it wasn't for CBGB's, there would never be Sick of it All, and I would probably have a regular life – college, job, all of that stuff. When Armand, Lou and I went to high school, we were the only people into that music. There was a couple of other kids in the school, but everybody else was either into disco or bands like The Grateful Dead or The Doors and stuff like that. We wanted something that was more alive, something that you could really be a part of. CBGB's matinees came about, and that's where our friends would be. Our friends weren't at school, we'd see them every Sunday at the show. It was pretty much everyone's meeting spot and relief after a week of school or work.

**AU: How have you seen the hardcore and punk scenes change over your career as a band?**

PK: Everything has its ups and downs. Of course, when it began, it was at its purest, and it was at its most fun, back then. There were no rules. There were no lawsuits. If you got hurt at the show, you were having fun while doing it, it just happened. Your friends were standing in the crowd watching you play, and then they would get on stage and be Agnostic Front. It was at its funnest in the beginning. But, if something stays around long enough, and more people get into it, it might get a little commercialized, and then it gets forgotten, and then you have the reunions and all that stuff. All over the world, it gets bigger and then it disappears, and then it comes back, like any scene.

**AU: You guys never did the break up and reunion thing.**

PK: Never. This is what we like to do. It's cool that people who didn't get to see the bands that broke up and are now doing reunions finally get to see them, but I always say that if you're gonna come back, you have to come back with fire. You can't be like, "Hey, this guy is gonna pay us 10,000

bucks. Ooh, I'm gonna slop my way through it and look like a slob on stage." You've gotta come back with full purity. People who have never seen the band might have heard they were amazing, but it's a bunch of fat bald guys who haven't played in ten years, and they're huffing

The thing that drives me nuts – at a show, I'll take a picture with you, sign whatever the fuck you want, but when we're playing and I see you taking a selfie, that's fucked up. We're giving it one thousand percent, and you're trying to get one of the guys in the frame with you - fuck you. The person doing that is trying to show everyone that they're there instead of being there. Instead of screaming along to his favourite song, he wants to show you that he's there. Fuck that.

**AU: Can you comment on the upcoming US election, and do you see any hope in the future of American politics?**

PK: I really don't know. I just hope that Bernie Sanders wins, to have something different. I don't know if everyone sees this, but many years ago Donald Trump was one of Hillary Clinton's biggest supporters. This is the way I see it: they're putting two candidates out there that you can vote for, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. A lot of people think that Trump is the best, but that is not the majority. The majority thinks the guy is a fucking asshole, so they want to vote for the other party. He used to be her biggest supporter, and now he is running against her, but he is assured not to win, so it is forcing you to vote for Hillary. Is it a setup? I don't know. That guy is a fucking moron. He's a TV show host moron, and he

says the most racist stupid shit because he wants the idiots to be like, "Yeah, this guy's great!"

**AU: Do you think that hardcore music has a role as an agent of change in our society?**

PK: It should. I don't know how much people listen to lyrics. Obviously you should think for yourself and make your own decisions, but music in general should be able to open people's eyes to different points of view. Not just hardcore... It would be nice if a pop band did something where kids could think, "Oh, wow, I wonder what they're talking about." Like, actual youths, little kids growing up. If Taylor Swift had a song about something that meant something, instead of break-ups and whatever, a kid might wonder what she's talking about and look into it. All music should have a responsibility to show people

alternative views.

**AU: Do you think the message of hardcore can be delivered to a mainstream audience?**

PK: Of course. A lot of bands put forth this weird thug thing, yelling that you're down with the crew for the rest of your life is fun when you're in the crowd, but is it really gonna change the future for your child? Is it gonna make things better for anybody? It's not gonna make anything better for you at all. Music is there to make us feel stuff, and I know that some music makes you feel cool and tough and that's cool, just know – do what you do, but know why you're doing it. That's a lyric from a GBH song. A lot of people follow along and don't know why they're doing it.

**AU: What can we expect from Sick of it All in the future?**

PK: Well, for this 30 year anniversary, we are putting together a photo book, and we recorded five brand-new songs. The book is going to be the size of a ten-inch vinyl, and the last page of the book will have a vinyl and a digital download of the songs, also. That should be out by the end of the year. And we have tours non-stop; we just came back from a three-week European thing, and I leave Thursday for California for nine shows. Then we have shows in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Colombia...

**AU: Are we going to get to see you here in Vancouver?**

PK: We always try to get back there. We haven't been back there since the 90s. It was like a Warped Tour, which we haven't played in 20 years. We're trying. The California thing was supposed to be the entire west coast and up to Vancouver, and it just became a thrown-together nine show thing. We were like, "What the fuck happened to Portland, Seattle, and everything else?" So we're probably going to do Portland, Seattle and work our way up. We haven't been out there in so long. Canada's always great for us.

*Sick Of It All will play Pouzza Fest in Montreal May 20-22, and the Opera House in Toronto on May 28th*

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*PHOTO SOURCE: centurymedia.com*







## ARTIST PROFILE

### Vincent Castiglia

Interview by Ira Hunter

American visual artist Vincent Castiglia has placed pieces in museums and galleries all over the world, contributed artwork to movie posters and metal band album covers, combined forces with the great HR Giger, and all in a very special medium... blood. Whether his own or that of clients, the blood employed by Castiglia makes his strikingly dark artwork all the more haunting; it certainly adds that "personal touch." This artist has steadily gathered international acclaim on many levels – most recently, he painted a guitar for Slayer guitarist Gary Holt, using 18 vials of the guitarist's own blood to transform the signature ESP.

Absolute Underground recently caught up with Mr. Castiglia to get a little more information on his unique artistic process and vision.



VC: Yes. I've worked in my own blood for many years. It's been a recent phenomenon for the collector to request paintings to be done in their blood.

**AU: How much blood are you medically allowed to give a week?**

VC: At this point, I get about 15 vials at a time, which is very moderate for me. I get that little just because I'm consistently taking it. If I were to collect blood from a collector, we could do more than that and it's still negligible in terms of the amount of blood we have in our bodies.

**AU: Tell us about the guitar you did for Gary Holt!**

VC: So I recently painted a custom guitar for Gary Holt of Slayer and Exodus, it was for ESP Guitars, and the guitar was painted entirely in Gary's own blood. I had extracted the blood backstage at a Slayer show in Long Island and later worked with it

on the guitar. It was a really amazing project, a pleasure and an honour to be working with Gary and Slayer. It was a really profound piece in that, this is an instrument through which Gary is executing his craft.

**AU: What got you started with art in the first place?**

VC: Making art really started as a distraction for me. I was drawing from as early as I could hold a pencil, and it really started as just the most efficient way to disconnect from my environment, because it was not a good one. Past a certain point, it was something that I had done because I had to, because I was obsessive. Then it became so much more than that. It wasn't just a means to disconnect, it became a catharsis. It all gets worked out on the canvas.

**AU: How did you come to the attention of HR Giger?**

VC: I was invited to an exhibition of his in Prague by a mutual contact, which I attended. It was there for the first time that he saw my work, and I later participated in a group show at the HR Giger Museum Gallery, and he saw it in person at that point, and that's the point at which we had got to talking about a solo show, which eventually happened. As an artist, I can't explain what an amazing and incredible pivot point in my life and memory that is.

**AU: Will there be a documentary about you coming out any time soon?**

VC: Yes, actually. We've been working on it for about a year now, John Borowski, an award-winning filmmaker, is working on the film. It'll be called *Bloodlines: The Art and Life of Vincent Castiglia* and it'll be a biopic. John is famous for his work on serial killers, all his films have been [on] serial killers, to date. Definitely a first for me to be this exposed, I've been candid in interviews and so forth over the course of time, but this is like covering everything from birth to now, as much. So I guess it's somewhat frightening in that sense, because it's like, my whole life out there.

**AU: You also do tattoo art?**



VC: Yes, I'm a tattoo artist. I work exclusively in black and grey, mainly larger-scale projects. I do one-off pieces, but usually it's larger work like sleeves and back pieces that I'm working on.

**AU: For your paintings, do you use a paintbrush, airbrush... ?**

VC: Paintbrush, very fine-tip. The first pass I might start with a larger round brush, but still small, because the process for me is pretty obsessive. I put it down as accurately as possible and I build it up in stages, dozens of passes over the surface of the painting. It takes me an incredible amount of time to do.

**AU: Is it pure blood or is it diluted?**

VC: Both. The initial passes, which are the lightest, are with the diluted blood. I work from about five

consistencies usually, just blood and water up to straight blood which, over the course of a painting, becomes darker and more opaque by means of decomposition. So the blood is actually decomposing and dehydrating somewhat, and it's becoming more deep and darker.

**AU: You also worked on a Triptykon album cover with Giger?**

VC: Yeah, that's correct. I worked on the band portrait which is in the

album. The cover was Giger's Vlad Tepes, which is Vlad The Impaler, and my painting was the band portrait on the inside.

**AU: Anything else coming up for you in the near future?**

VC: There's a new project coming up which I'll be able to talk about very soon, another Rock and Roll Hall of Fame musician,

**AU: Final words for Canadian fans?**

VC: For Canadian tattoo enthusiasts, I'd like to shout my friend Tim Reed out, he has done a lot of incredible work on me, and he's at Black Sheep Tattoo Studio in Windsor.

Stay brutal!

[vincentcastiglia.com](http://vincentcastiglia.com)

[www.arcanumstudionyc.com](http://www.arcanumstudionyc.com)

#### Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself.

Vincent Castiglia: I'm a New York-based artist, and I work in a singularly unique medium, which is human blood.

**AU: Did you start with your own blood?**

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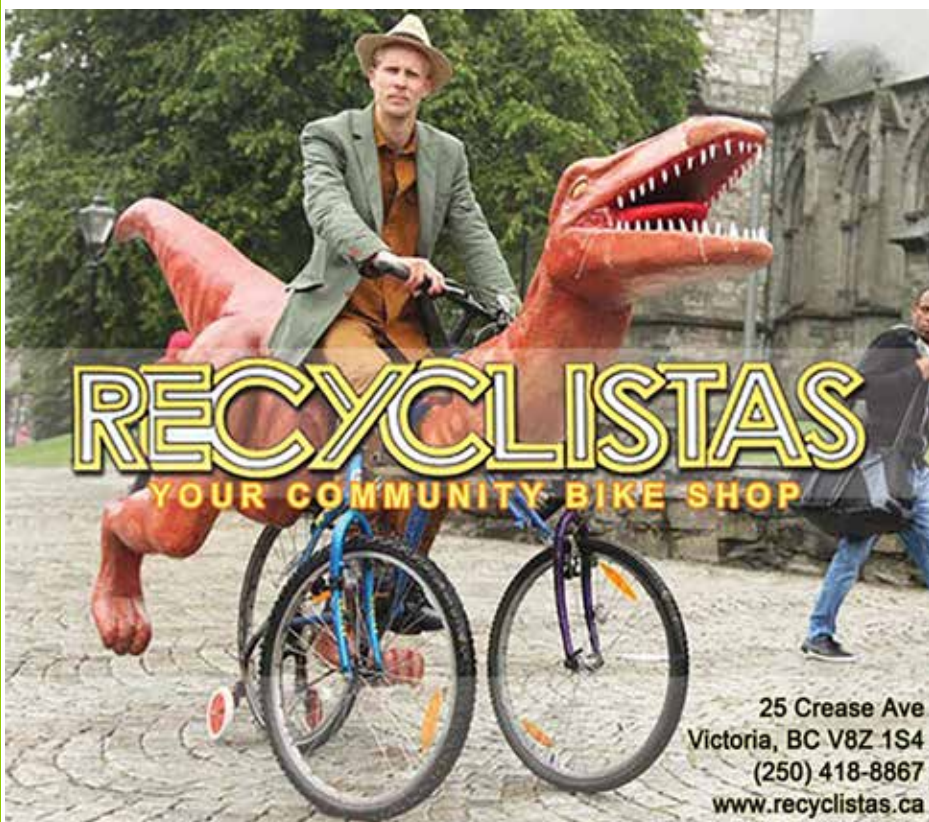
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## Satan

Interview by Andre Laniel

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Steve Ramsey: For being a guitarist in a band called Satan!

**AU: What's happening right now with you guys? What's new and exciting?**

SR: We've just finished a short tour on the west coast in the US, which included our first show in Victoria, Canada. We've got a couple of days off, then we're heading down to London for a headline show, then over to Belgium and Holland for a couple more. We're on a few major festivals in Europe this year, including Rock Hard in Germany and Metal Days in Lithuania. We've also got plans to do a midwest and east coast tour in the States in October, which should include Montreal and Toronto in Canada. There are some shows in Scandinavia being planned for October, too.

**AU: You've been a band for a long time – what are some of the changes you've observed in your music over time, and what has stayed the same?**

SR: We've pretty much stayed in the same style as we began on *Court In The Act*, even after a 30-year hiatus! That was written when we were all around 17 years old. Our musicianship has obviously improved over that time, and we utilise that in the songwriting now.

**AU: How about the global metal culture in general, what are some of the biggest changes you've witnessed over the course of your careers?**

SR: For us, the internet has obviously been responsible for the rebirth of the band, with many young metal fans listening to what was going on in the early eighties. It's easier to play shows all over the world now, which seemed like just a dream when we were first starting out. Career-wise, the internet is also responsible for the dramatic drop in sales of recordings, which was what we used to live on. Being a band called Satan was detrimental to us back then, especially as we were tagged in with the death metal and black metal scene that was emerging. We have never had anything to do with the occult, etc. Since then, there have been so many extreme forms of metal that being called Satan isn't a big deal anymore. No more Christians turning up to protest at shows like in the early days!

**AU: What was Newcastle like in the 80s? Would you paint us a picture of the scene back then?**

SR: It was great. It was the time of the NWOBHM, and there was a really vibrant scene in our area. Loads of bands, including Raven, Venom, Tysondog, Atomkraft, etc. We made a lot of friends in bands and would see each other at gigs like Maiden, Priest, Scorpions, Lizzy too. Where we live is a very working class town like Birmingham, where Sabbath and Priest were from, and Sheffield, which included bands like Def Leppard, among others. It was a good way to take the frustration



away from the poor economy and lack of jobs at the time.

**AU: What do you take inspiration from, musically or otherwise?**

SR: Musically it was bands like Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, and Judas Priest, then later Motörhead, Thin Lizzy, Rush and newer bands like Angel Witch. We wanted to have something to say in the lyrics too, not fantasy or girls and booze! We were watching what was going on in the world and used Satan as a representation of all the evil that mankind does to his own species, and [this] included politics religion and current affairs as subject matter.

**AU: How does your latest album, *Atom By Atom*, compare to past releases? Any plans to record again soon?**

SR: For the first time, we wrote more songs than necessary to make an album, and have a few left

over for the next album already. The material on *Atom* took a very pessimistic stance overall, and that lead us to choose what went on it. It is more progressive, both lyrically and musically, in parts than the other two albums recorded with Brian on vocals. We'll probably do another album next year after we've done all the touring for *Atom*.

**AU: What words of wisdom would you offer young bands just starting out in today's metal scene?**

SR: Don't expect to make a living, do it for the love of your music and if it happens it happens!

**AU: What does the future hold for Satan?**

SR: More of the same. They are still a few places we'd like to get to play that we haven't already.

**AU: Any final words for our readers? What should we know about you that we don't already?**

SR: Hope to see you all on tour somewhere. Nothing that we're going to reveal!

[www.satanmusic.com/](http://www.satanmusic.com/)

PHOTO SOURCE: [satanmusic.com](http://satanmusic.com)





## Rotting Christ

Interview by Adam VanThiel

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Sakis Tolis: You are talking with Mr. Sakis / Necromayhem, the guitarist, vocalist and composer of the band.

**AU: What were your inspirations for the new album, lyrically and/or musically?**

ST: Ancient civilizations, well-hidden knowledge, mythology, and dark music inspired me in the last album, an album that, in my opinion, is the darkest release of the band so far.

**AU: Why did you choose to incorporate rites and mythologies from around the globe in the content of this album?**

ST: I remember that I myself am a traveler, and I adore hidden knowledge and history of the civilizations. There are paths to eternity there, but we, the modern people, somehow do not care.

**AU: What is the band's connection with Aleister Crowley? Is this connection still playing a significant role in your music?**

ST: We consider his work as an important part of occultism history, and he has definitely inspired us, but just inspired... no more.

**AU: Did you try anything new or experimental on this album, that we may not have heard on previous ones?**

ST: The variety of my voice and, of course, the weird languages that are more [present] than ever in this album. I used Aramaic, Ancient Greek, French, Sanskritic Orcish! I tried to be as close as possible to the main concept of the songs, using

their official language.

Also, this is an album that is based more in lyrics than music, [which is] something that I have never tried in the past.

**AU: Can you tell us a little bit about your writing process? Has it changed since the band was formed, and if so how?**

ST: Oh yes! I think that it has changed a lot. Back in the day, I was composing following my instinct, but now I follow my spirit. In the first days I was [playing] guitar, I was smoking tons of pot and I was expecting the riffs to come. Now I read first, then I meditate, then I take [up] the guitar. Really, I do not know which way is the best, but definitely I do follow the dark side in both eras.

**AU: Back in the day, Rotting Christ played an incredible mix of grind and death metal. What made you decide to move into the darker and more violent-sounding world of black metal?**

ST: Blame Venom, Celtic Frost, and Bathory

for that! I couldn't escape from the dark side, indeed!

**AU: Many people forget that you were a major part of the "second wave" of black metal, mostly because of the**

**Scandinavian explosion. Has that ever played a role in the aggression behind your music?**

ST: They should read history and realize that there were more than Scandinavian bands that were part of the second wave of black metal... Bands that had created their own sound and put their own brick on the wall of what we call it today. As a band, we count more than 1200 shows all around the world, in a more than a quarter of an age



existence. [We are] always true to the old spirit!

**AU: In regards to the artwork for the album, is there a specific message or significance underlying it?**

ST: This is the real face of a ritual, simple as that. Both me and my brother appear on the cover after a ritual!

**AU: How did you feel when your new album hit #14 on the Billboard Heatseekers charts?**

ST: I do not hide that I am glad that American metalheads accepted the album positively, but I do not count the music by numbers. If I have spoken to your soul with our new release, you made me number 1.

**AU: Many people have said this is the most personal-sounding record you have released, would you agree?**

ST: Yes, I think that they are right. This is the end of a trilogy that started with *Theogonia* and finished with *Rituals*. Now the band is seeking new path, with new influences to surprise [audiences] positively with our next album. We thank our metal brothers all around the world for their great response to our last four albums. We hope to not disappoint you in the future.

**AU: Any plans to tour? Will you be visiting Canada any time soon?**

ST: Rotting Christ without tour cannot exist. See you in your land this coming September! Until then, keep the spirit alive!

**AU: What does the future hold for Rotting Christ?**

ST: Dark spiritual creation as long as our health permits. Rotting Christ will always be [on the] frontline in the battlefield, anywhere that metal orders.

**AU: Any final words for your Canadian fans?**

ST: Be true to your own spirit and keep the flame burning! We hope *Rituals* speaks to your soul. Until we meet up in the battlefield... *Non Serviam!*

[www.rotting-christ.com/](http://www.rotting-christ.com/)

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### BASKIN

DIRECTOR CAN EVRENOL

A squad of unsuspecting cops go through a trapdoor to Hell when they stumble upon a Black Mass in an abandoned building.

FRIDAY APRIL 15, 11:59 PM (18+)



### THE HEXECUTIONERS

DIRECTOR JESSE THOMAS COOK

A chilling horror thriller about two young women who unwittingly summon a Death Cult while performing an assisted-suicide.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 13, 10:15 PM (18+)



### LACE CRATER

DIRECTOR HARRISON ATKINS

During a drug-fueled weekend with friends, Ruth has a one-night stand with a ghost. Soon after, she begins to feel a bit... strange.

SATURDAY APRIL 16, 9:30 PM (18+)



### THE LURE

DIRECTOR AGNIESZKA SMOCZYNSKA

A Polish 1980s-set musical horror fantasy about two mermaid sisters.

FRIDAY APRIL 15, 9:45 PM (18+)

SUNDAY APRIL 17, 9 PM (18+)



### PATCHWORK

DIRECTOR TYLER MACINTYRE

A gory horror comedy about three women who have been murdered, dissected, and reassembled into a single person.

SATURDAY APRIL 16, 11:59 PM (18+)



### SHORTS: DARK AND DELICIOUS

A wildly dark, fun, disturbing, and gore-ific mix of horror shorts in a variety of styles, and sub genres.

THURSDAY APRIL 14, 10 PM (18+)



### UNDER THE SHADOW

DIRECTOR BABAK ANVARI

As a mother and daughter struggle to cope with the terrors of the post-revolution, war torn Tehran, evil begins to haunt their home.

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# Trichome Consulting

Interview by Ira Hunter

John Karroll has logged thousands of hours of dedicated research in the medical marijuana industry, gaining extensive knowledge of North American Cannabis Industry, Health Canada and OCS licensing requirements, including all medical marijuana Health Canada programs.

With Trichome Consulting Services (TCSI), John has 50 (active) MMPP LP applications with Health Canada for his clients, from locations in every province across Canada, plus clients and affiliated partners in New York, Oregon, Colorado, Nevada, Florida, Washington State, California, Texas, Alaska, and many more. John has drafted numerous medical marijuana corporate business plans for clients, established affiliations and partnerships with specialized medical marijuana service providers, labs, security, software and environmental companies, pharmacists, medical professionals, trades, financing, mortgage companies, and insurance underwriters. Trichome Consulting has assembled a world-class, professional team of highly motivated and innovative cannabis industry experts, working together to achieve success within the various regulatory environments, effectively "raising the bar" on industry standards.

**Absolute Underground: What's your mission statement?**

John Karroll: Our mission is to create a medically legal corporate business environment.

**AU: How did you first become involved in this industry?**

JK: I've been living in beautiful BC since the early 70s. The West Coast lifestyle and cannabis culture were entrenched in our social society for Canada, plus USA western states California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska. I got involved eight years ago, in 2008, primarily due to a family member becoming ill with pancreatitis, IBS, plus gastrointestinal and chronic pain issues. The established medical community had no cure for the diagnosis, and basically offered a series of pharmaceutical painkillers, numerous opium-

based drugs, morphines, etc. We believed in the medical system and followed all their prescriptions as required, and no relief was being achieved. Instead of recovery, there were numerous other medical complications, due to the many prescription drugs being ingested. Basically, going to hospital-promoted pain clinics on how to "live with the illness," plus the "quality of life" was diminished significantly, we realized that we needed to explore other options, remedies, naturopathy, diets, etc. to find relief and search for a cure. The answer was medical marijuana; oil extracts, edibles, and we are pleased to share that my family member is basically free of all the opiates and prescription pain killers and has an active, enjoyable, and fulfilling life.

[In light of] the incredible results achieved with the oil extracts, I privately enlisted a Victoria lab, scientists, QA/QC professionals, University of Victoria research department members, and applied with Health Canada and the OCS for an Exemption 56 as a licensed research company, to develop a "chronic pain medicine" using medical marijuana derivatives, then proceed to clinical trials. The submission was delivered personally to the Minister of Health in Ottawa by my MP. I received a call from the Minister's office and they invited me to participate as a stakeholder in the Medical Marijuana program. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health came to BC to meet with myself and my MP. I was thoroughly involved in the cannabis industry from that point on.

**AU: Were you surprised that the United States implemented the legalization of marijuana before Canada did?**

JK: Not surprised at all, as the USA State governments (not federal) were listening to the citizens, providing referendums and moving forward in their various regulatory processes to provide medical marijuana programs, plus legalization in some states etc. It seems almost daily in the USA media, many of the medical programs in various states are being transitioned into legalized and recreational marijuana programs.

**AU: What can we learn from the States that**

**have already legalized?**

JK: The best message is that it can be done, and we do not have to reinvent the wheel. Canada should review what is working and what isn't, and get the programs implemented into our society.

**AU: What can you tell us about the new Liberal government's Legalized Marijuana Program?**

AU: I am cautiously supportive of the new Liberal Party's goal to legalize marijuana, plus with the recent Supreme Court victories, the Government has quite the task ahead. Hopefully they will listen to the people, and legalize marijuana without major restrictions, allowing people to grow their medicine. I hope they do not make the application process a bureaucratic, dysfunctional experience for applicants to be compliant with the new court-ordered regulations for commercial production licenses and the medical program.

**AU: Will it be possible for Justin Trudeau to get it legalized or will there be too much red tape?**

JK: Marijuana will be legalized in Canada. The Liberal Marijuana program will have its challenges as they draft the new legalization regulations. In addition, as per supreme court ruling, Health Canada is to redesign the Medical Marijuana program. I've spoken with policymakers for Health Canada that have the task of drafting the new regulations, and they are diligently working on the new regulations to present to the government.

**AU: Why do you think the previous government was so anti-pot?**

JK: The previous government had their own "seemingly hidden agenda," did not listen to the citizens of Canada and subsequently lost the election.

**AU: How does the little guy get involved in this growing industry before the mega corporations take things over?**

JK: The little guy can complete applications with TCSI, helping them through the process. The time is better than ever! The application process is a federal process through Health Canada. It is expected that the recreational applications will transition from the existing medical program, similar to Colorado, and other USA States. With

this new cannabis era fast approaching, the time to "get in queue" with your Health Canada application and receive your marijuana file number is now. Many cannabis industry experts envision it ultimately expanding like the wine industry, with small "mom & pop" boutique style facilities as well as larger facilities. With potentially over ten million recreational users, the small production facilities will be needed to meet supply and demand requirements.

**AU: What do you see as the ultimate solution to the medical and recreational marijuana laws in Canada?**

JK: The bureaucratic process needs to be simplified. Legalize, plus allow patients to grow their own, and continue with the MMAR licenses. Medical marijuana should receive a DIN number so provincial medical pharmacare programs across Canada will subsidize marijuana, similar to other medical prescriptions.

**AU: What are some of the benefits of medical marijuana that you can share with us.**

JK: The Investigative Reports, plus CNN's Weeds Program (three-part series analyzing marijuana), should be viewed by everyone to understand the many benefits, plus thousands of medical studies can be accessed through NORML. On any given day on media outlets in North America, there are hundreds of marijuana stories.

**AU: How will you be celebrating 420 this year?**

JK: I will be at the Sunset Beach 420 event in Vancouver.

**AU: Final words for our readers... Anything else you'd like to add or mention?**

JK: Check out [www.TrichomeConsultingServices.com](http://www.TrichomeConsultingServices.com) regularly, as many cannabis industry updates are listed on a regular basis. Also, go to [www.BCCannaConference.com](http://www.BCCannaConference.com) and participate with this new annual conference.

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# Absolute Horror

## Slasher Video

By Vince D'Amato

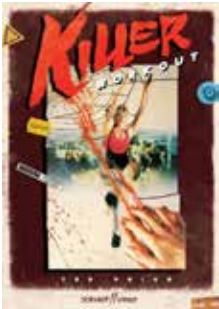
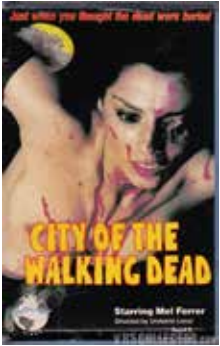
It was in the summer of 1994 that I walked into the little corner store – an independent retailer – at Richards & Pender Street in Vancouver. It was primarily music-focused, a used and collectible record store; the proprietor also had a lot of CDs – but in the far back corner of the store, as far away from the summer sun streaming in through the large glass windows as physically possible, was a small, wooden thrift-store bookshelf that held, in no discernible order whatsoever, used VHS tapes of all genres. Interestingly, there were no mainstream Hollywood movies on that shelf. There were a couple of 80s horror films that starred a very young Bill Paxton and a weird-looking horror-thriller that starred Sting and was directed by celebrated filmmaker Robert Altman, the name of which I can no longer remember. Attempts to find this film on the internet have been fruitless. Possibly, the VHS cover was using an alternate title; this happened quite a bit in those days. I still remember Umberto Lenzi's *Nightmare City* and its Canadian-release VHS cover from the early 80s: a naked woman hanging upside-down with her nipple torn off, and the alternative title, *City of the Walking Dead*, partially obscuring said ripped-off nipple. Also long forgotten was the name of this little corner store and used-record shop. The shop itself has been gone for decades now, replaced by an ever-increasingly dilapidated convenience store that is somehow, inexplicably, still in operation to this day. I do remember, however, having a lively conversation with the proprietor when I brought the used VHS tape of Stuart Gordon's *Re-Animator* up to his counter for purchase. He was a tall, young-ish man with a sore-looking condition of skin psoriasis all over his otherwise pale face. I was about to pay \$9.95 plus tax for this used *Re-Animator* tape that had been re-packed in a black Amaray clamshell by some unknown video store long before it ever wound up at this guy's shop, and he proceeded to explain to me why the VHS videotape in my hands would never become valuable to any collector.

"Look at this," he said, removing the videotape from inside the clamshell case and pressing the tiny black

release button that allowed the back of the tape to swing up, exposing the magnetic tape and all of the thin, silver and white reels the tape had to wind around in order to get from the right side to the left while playing through a VCR. "All these moving parts. Records don't have moving parts, and that's why they can become collectible. Something like this, all these parts and components – it will never become collectible. These tapes won't ever be worth anything to any collector." I paid for my *Re-Animator* tape and left.

I still have that tape to this day, almost 22 years later.

Funny enough, I was not the only one to hold onto a couple of my old VHS horror tapes. In fact, I literally only held onto a couple of them when the DVD revolution hit. Now, though, it's astoundingly clear that VHS tapes have indeed become highly coveted collectors' items, some going for hundreds of dollars on eBay and Amazon, in a time where we've gone even further beyond the original DVD revolution of the new millennium into HD and 4K Blu-ray disc media, creating something of a treasure trove for collectors of all types of media from magnetic standard definition to digital hi-def picture quality. Often, fans of niche and genre film fare are the ones benefiting; many genre (horror) titles have survived the advances in film media technology and it's not unusual to see titles that have made it across all the home video formats: Betamax, VHS, Laserdisc, DVD, and Blu-ray (and I'll include digital streaming in this sentiment, as well). Of course, the biggest impacts were made by the VHS, DVD and Blu-ray formats specifically, clearly defining the technological generations in home video history. With these defined generations, we see that there are also titles that had skipped a generation, and it's amusing to me when I happen to come across a horror or cult film title that had run out its print in the VHS days only to make a surprise comeback on a hi-def 1080p Blu-ray disc, while missing out on the entire DVD



generation altogether.

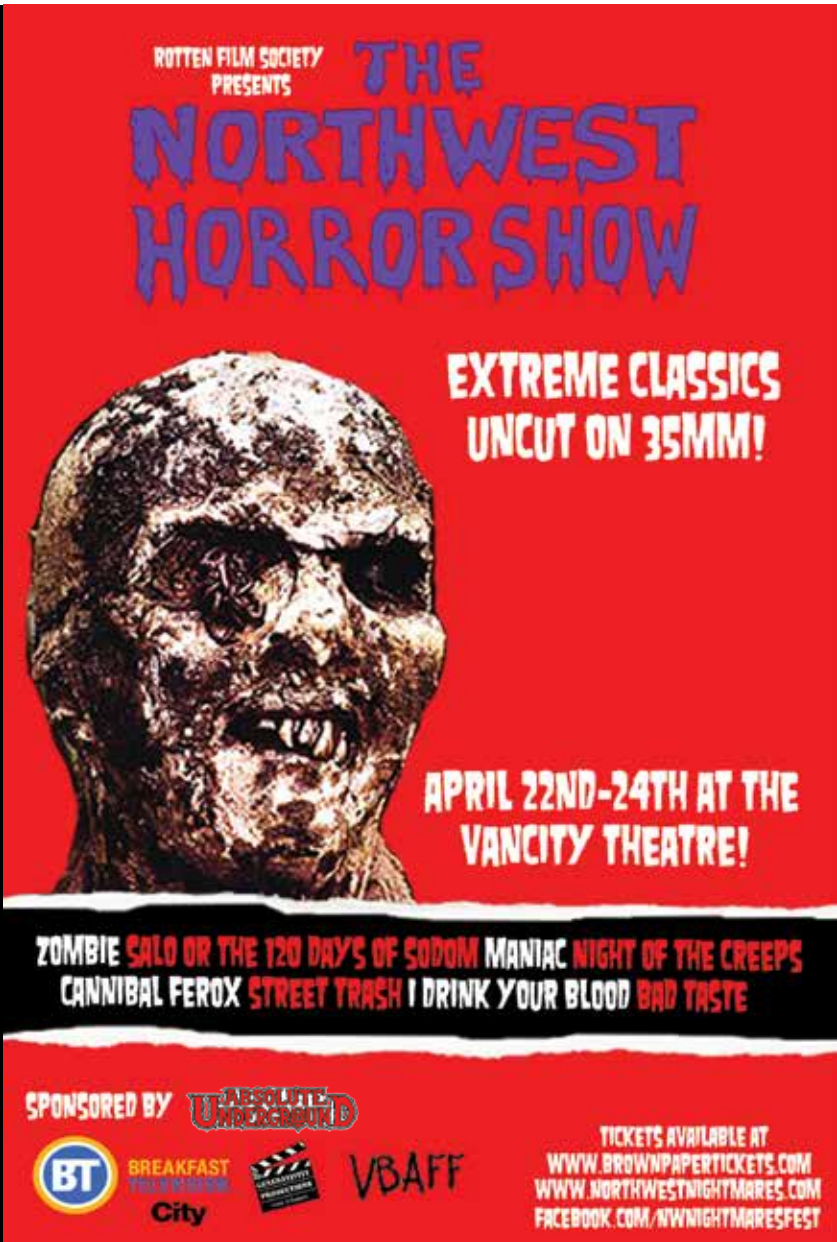
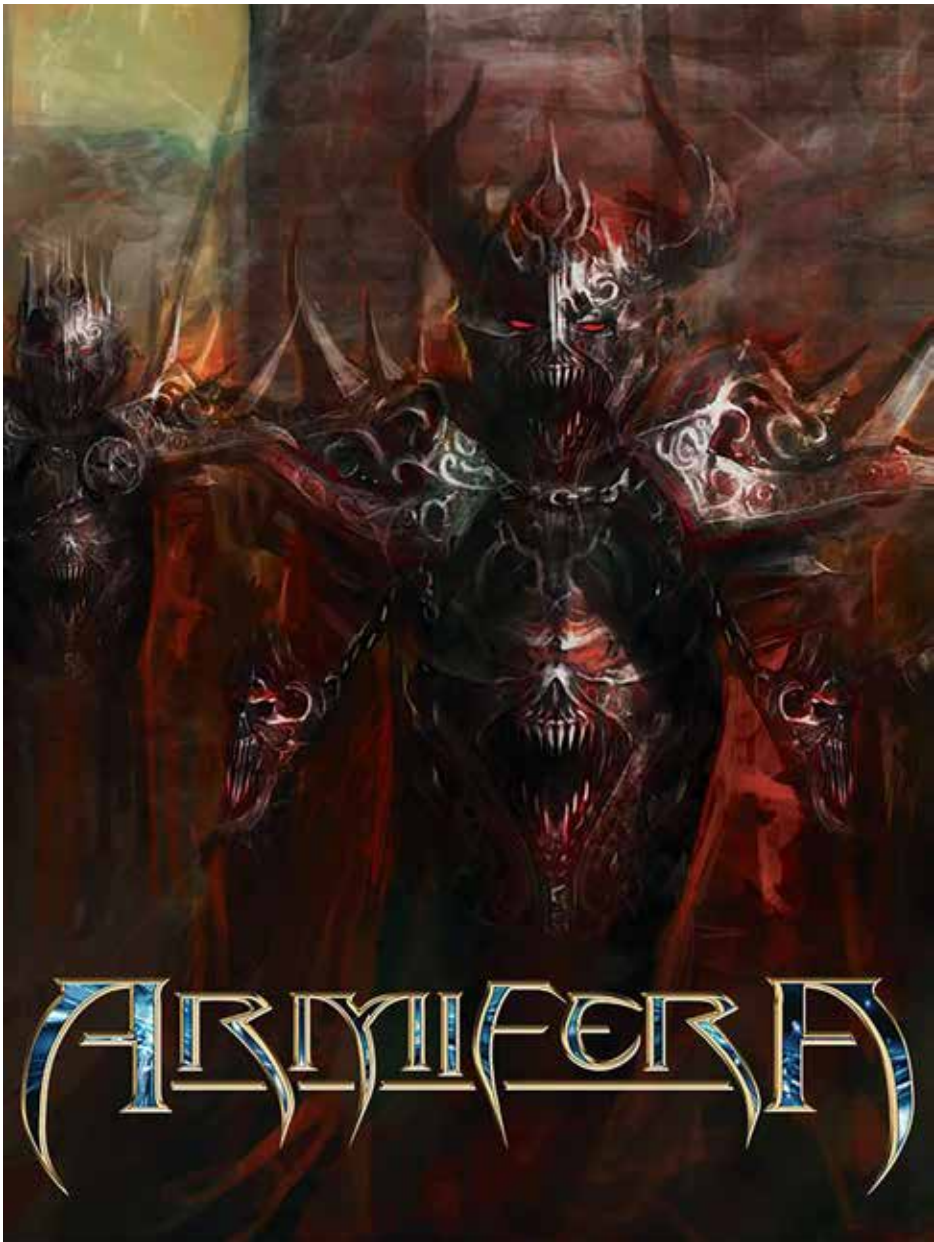
Most recently, Slasher//Video (through an output/imprint deal with the Blu-ray distribution company Olive Films) has begun to release niche and sought-after horror and slasher videos on Blu-ray, while incorporating the nostalgic aspects of the VHS days. These Slasher//Video releases were not entirely imagined by design – often, Slasher//Video (Olive Films) could only track down a Betacam SP tape master to provide us with the digital transfer to their Blu-ray discs – Betacam SP is a large videotape master, in standard definition (or Standard Play, SP), that was the standard delivery master to broadcast television and often to direct-to-video distribution in the 80s and 90s. In the case of the direct-to-video films, while they were nearly all originally shot on film, they were cut together and mastered only onto standard definition Betacam SP tapes in that bygone era of film and video production. The very name of these tapes – Standard Play – signified the maximum video quality that the technology had produced at that time. So now, mixing these distant generations of video technology, Slasher//Video has given us niche horror and genre fans a bit of an unusual and offbeat treat – we can see these wonderfully strange, gory, exciting and low-budget, originally direct-to-home-video horror movies, in their original video/VHS anesthetic, but on a Blu-ray disc that will never wear down, no matter how many times the film is played at home. In the VHS days, god forbid you would fast-forward to your favourite part of the tape (an explosion of blood, a couple of boobs, a kickass werewolf transformation and subsequent gory slaughter) more than a couple of times; the tape would soon develop tracking issues and interruptive glitches, constantly changing the way you could see your favourite scenes. Admittedly, this is one of the charming aspects about VHS to some collectors. But, for

those who are keen on reliving the nostalgia of the VHS aesthetics with their 1980s horror obscurities, Slasher//Video and Olive Films have fallen on something very unique for horror fans by delivering that VHS aesthetic on their Blu-ray and DVD releases. I'm curious to see how Slasher//Video's new mixed-technology, retro-releases will be received by fans down the road. For me, it provides the chance to see some of the films that I missed before the VHS tape went extinct, and I'm loving it.

Alternatively, Shane Burzynski and his Northwest Horror Show will be bringing Lower Mainland horror fans, for the second year in a row, a hearty and bloody slough of nostalgic horror favourites – and in their original 35mm formats, to boot! Vancouver's Vancity Theatre will play host once again to Shane's Horror Show, and this year's three-day fest promises to be pretty damned stellar – with prints of *I Drink Your Blood*, *Manic*, *Bad Taste*, *Night of the Creeps* and *Salo: 100 Days of Sodom* to name a few! This will be a truly eclectic horror-genre experience, laced with American cult icons attending as special guests – Lynn Lowry, Tom Atkins, and a call-in interview with Bill Lustig. We'll be there on-hand conducting the interviews and Q&As! The Northwest Horror Show screens at the Vancity Theatre April 22-24, and will be preceded by Cinemafanatstique Fest's free National Canadian Film Day event on April 20 (at the Norm Theatre, UBC), showcasing 13 badass short horror films by Canadian and local filmmakers, with an interactive panel featuring horror filmmakers and local celebs Gigi Saul Guerrero (Luchagore Productions), Tristan Risk, Carolyn Williams and more! April will definitely be the horror community's month!

[www.slashervideo.com/](http://www.slashervideo.com/)

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## Ask The Cretin

With Murray "The Cretin" Acton

Well, I have endured another month of dodging accusations from so-called "progressive liberals" who would have us all segregated into groups defined by what we are not, or in other words, persecuted for our individual differences. Correct me if I am wrong here (actually don't bother, because I am not wrong), but wouldn't we be better off if we could unite in joyous celebration of our differences? I would like to put this one out there: I am an English-speaking, white, heterosexual, male, atheist. By nature, I am what I think would be called a "classic liberal," although I don't really like the term because it implies a rigid political alignment that I am not willing to adhere to. All I mean by this is that I believe in equal rights and equal opportunity for everyone. Ok, so now we can get to the dilemma I have been presented with this month. It doesn't come from an individual as such, and is not even really directed at me (as of yet), but it is becoming more and more prevalent in the world around me, and is most pervasive in the bizarre new arena known as the social media. This dilemma is quite complex and I struggle to find the words to accurately define it, but I will give it a try. Just because I am white, does not make me pro-white, or anti-any other race. I think that there are inherent differences between the races that can be recognized and celebrated without denying any individual the right to pursue happiness and fulfillment as they perceive it. Just because I am a heterosexual does not make me anti-gay, or anti-transgendered, or anti- any other kind of sexual alignment, as long as that alignment respects the basic rights of the rest of us. I do not believe anyone has the right to force the rest of us to witness every detail of their sexual alignment. That would be rude and, in many cases, disgusting. For everyone's sake, keep that shit in the bedroom.

I hope that at this point it should be obvious that being male doesn't make me anti-female. I love women. Not all of them of course, and not always for the same reasons nor in the same way that I love my male friends. Obviously, the differences between men and women are greater even than those between the races, but I still feel that they should be recognized and celebrated in a fashion that does not deny an individual of either gender the right to pursue happiness

and fulfillment as they perceive it. Lastly, I am an atheist. Or, at least I am one today. I would like to think that I am open-minded enough that if I was presented with evidence that contradicted my current beliefs, I would bring it into the equation. The fact that I am an atheist does not imply that I am without morals. It should be apparent from what I have already said here that I have a well-established, clearly understood moral code that I do my best to follow at all times. These are things that I have always known. They were not, as far as I know, taught to me. I have known these things since birth. They are, in fact, what makes me an atheist in the first place. They are also the reason why I believe in the right of other people not to be atheists. I have no problem with anyone who dares to give it a try to break my atheistic beliefs and convert me to be a follower of any religion, as long as their methods do not deny me my basic right to pursue happiness as I perceive it. So, I think I have described who I am as accurately as I can. I am an individual, much the same as everyone else, but at the same time, uniquely different. I am not asking to be treated differently than anyone else, I am asking to be treated the same as everyone else, without being singled out. I would like to say that while we should not forget the past, we should put it behind us. We should not allow the actions of our ancestors to dictate how we treat each other today. We should recognize that we are all individuals, respected for being that, while at the same time remembering that we are also all equal members of the human race, which is in itself is just one of the organisms that inhabit this planet, and as such, is entitled to the same undeniable right to the pursuit of happiness and fulfillment. So until next month, in the words of Dr. Spock, "Live long, and prosper." And of course, if you have a question for me, send it to asktheCretin@outlook.com



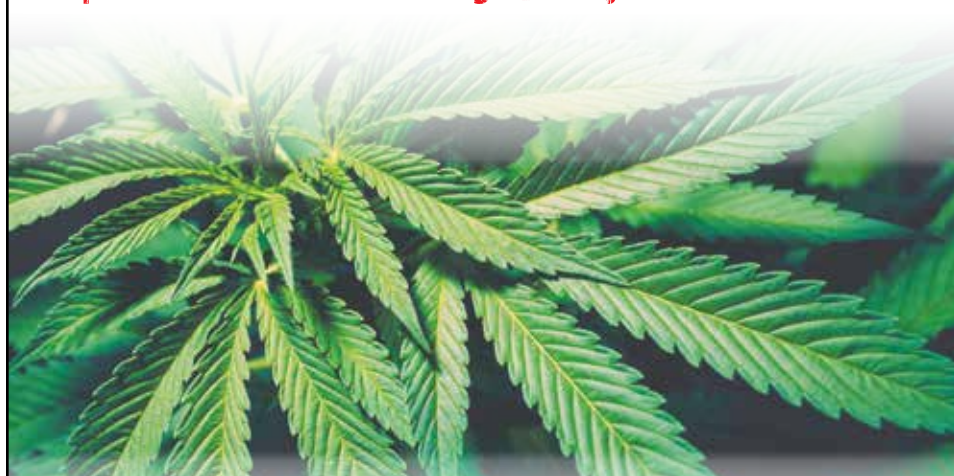


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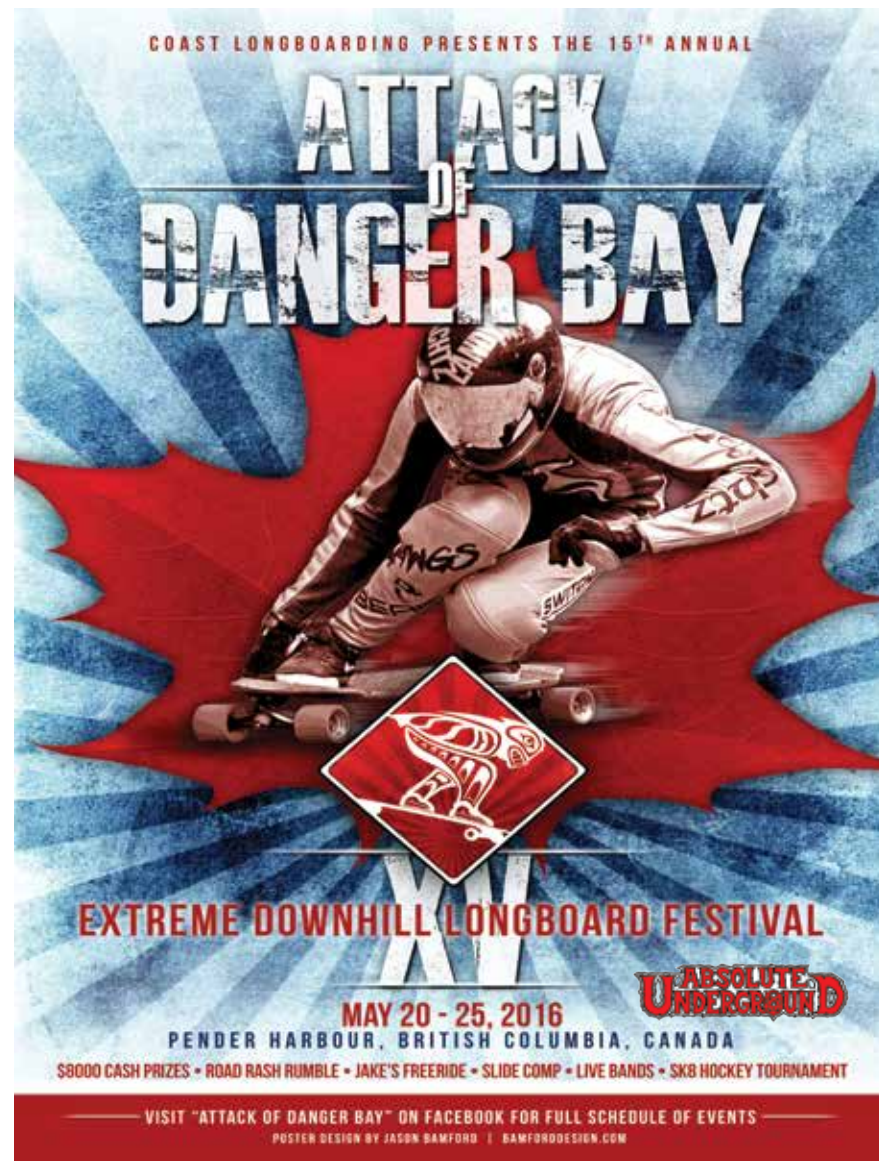
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## Cherry Bomb Toys

Interview by Mr. Anonymous

**Absolute Underground: Hey Cherry Bomb! Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?**

Cherry Bomb: Hello AU, this is B and Candice of Cherry Bomb Toys. We are infamous for having too many toys.

**AU: Tell us a little about your business, for those who aren't aware of you. Where are you located, what do you specialize in?**

CB: Cherry Bomb Toys is a vintage and collectible toy store in the heart of downtown Victoria. We specialize in awesome toys from all eras, as well as Lego, local art, comics, records and other kinds of fun.

**AU: You guys recently opened a Toy Museum upstairs, and it's looking fantastic! Tell us how that got started... what gave you the idea?**

CB: Thank you. It's a project that we've been

working on for the past year. We wanted to find a way to help our beloved downtown offer more for families and collectors from near and far. We figured as we see so many amazing pieces walk through our door, and we had a little extra space in the shop, this might be a solution.

**AU: How do you go about getting display**

**pieces for it? Do people donate, do you guys have personal stashes that you're raiding?**

CB: What's on display in the museum now is a good mix of everything. We have some pieces on loan from other collectors, whereas other pieces are from our personal collection. For the most part, it's been what we've collected in the past year, as well as a few donations. All in all, it's been a great group effort, and wouldn't have been possible without all the amazing support so far.

**AU: Do you have any personal favourite pieces in there? Are there any articles you're particularly looking to get your hands on?**

CB: There are so many awesome pieces, it's really hard to just pick one. B loves the Muppet display

and Candice is a big fan of the Shogun Warriors with their boxes. The *Stargate* props and *Star Trek* scripts are awesome and unique in their own ways. If we had to pick one thing, it would be the stories that come with some of the pieces. B loves to share those the most. We're always looking for anything that would be a great addition. We want



the museum to grow to the point where it needs its own building. So everything that comes in is something to look forward to and learn about, and the best part is sharing that with everyone else.

**AU: Is there a staff consensus on the new *Star Wars*?**

CB: *Star Wars* was fun, and was a good start for the next chapter in a very much beloved space saga. Of course, as with any good movie, it gave all these new questions that we all want resolved sooner than later. But that's the basis of any good storytelling, right?

**AU: Though it's always had a strong underground following, comic book/graphic novel/sci-fi culture seems to be making a comeback in the mainstream these days. Care to weigh in on this? When did it become "cool" to be a geek, and why?**

CB: It's always been cool to be a geek. These are the folks who've never been afraid to follow their passions, no matter what others think. It's the devoted fans of anything - be it toys, comics, music and really anything worth putting your spare time into - it's those fans that help keep all these awesome things alive. It's great to see the movie industry taking the time to try and be more

true to the source material. It's the least the fans deserve.

**AU: Are you hitting up any expos this year? If so, is there anyone you're particularly stoked to see?**

CB: I would love to try and make it to Emerald City Comic Con this year, and stop by the ThreeA booth. As we have so much in the works, chances are slim we can escape. It's all good though, there's always next year.

**AU: What else should we know about Cherry Bomb Toys? Do you have any events or clubs coming up that people can check out?**

CB: Right now we're prepping for our next Toy Show, coming up on May 1st at Pearkes Arena. We always have something in the works. Just jump on our Facebook page or Instagram to keep up on all the fun updates.

**AU: Final words for our readers?**

CB: Thanks for all the great support over the last eleven years, we look forward to bringing you more fun things in the future!

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# SHRED SESSION



## Scarlos & Porridge Man

Interview by Malcolm Hassin

The Smiling Buddha boys chat with Jaks Team and Skull Skates Team members Scarlos and Porridge Man.

**Absolute Underground: What are your names and/or nicknames?**

Carlos: Carlos Longo, aka Scarlos.

Roland: Roland Mechler, aka Porridge Man.

**AU: What was the importance of the East Van cross in the 70s, and how has it influenced skateboarding in Canada?**

C: It started out from us straight up taking it from Dogtown, and "east side" or "east end" did not fit

the cross. Ron Daily, who is gone now, is the one that came up with "east van" and we just went "fuck yeah!" and that was it.

R: Basically, Gladstone School is where it all originated. It was a skateboarding thing and then it just evolved into other things.

C: I'm a Gladstone schooler ...

R: I think it died when they (the yuppies) put up that big sign!

**AU: What's the craziest thing you have seen at China Creek?**

R: Oh yeah! Was it Dirk? When they still had the railing between the two bowls, he tried to ollie it and totally did the fuckin' von-splits-er-myer.

C: That was fucking crazy...

**AU: Who is Evil Longo?**

C: That was my brother... that's hilarious. It actually started from Evil Ed, who used to jump over couches and stuff when I was really young. I went over to his house and he challenged me to a bike-jumping contest. I didn't know what the fuck I was doing. I get to his house on a skateboard and he starts laughing at me, and I am like, "Ok, I'll challenge you," and I totally beat him. I jumped over like two-and-a-half couches, and he ate shit. It was awesome. He gave me his bike and everything. Total Sears bike with the fake gas tank and shocks and stuff like that. It was pretty cool.

**AU: Was Brutus hard on ramps?**

R: He totally was.

C: I remember him doing an invert pretty close to the flat bottom and going through the whole ramp.

R: We usually couldn't wait to put the second layer [of plywood] on to skate, so Brutus usually went through.

C: Brent "Brutus" Williams.

**AU: What can you tell us about Cory Campbell?**

R: He was for sure the raddest skater in Canada in the 70s, up 'til about the early 80s. I didn't know anybody like him who would sacrifice his body for skating the way he would. He just went for it.

C: Oh yeah! I learned a lot from him, I have to say. Cory Campbell is a true ripper!

R: I think he's still got the attitude. I was talking to him on the phone a couple years ago, "Yeah, you know me, Mechler, if I am not flying four feet out of the bowl, I'm fucking bored." That pretty much sums it up.

**AU: Carlos, tell us about living in Trout Lake.**

C: Oh. My. God. Well... I had a good view. I have to say; man, it was a beautiful view. I lived there for about four years when I was not in the best of... whatever... it was pretty miserable. I don't really want to go too into it, but that's about it, it's just depressing. It sucked, and now I can look back at it. Wow! It really sucked. It was all about drugs 'cause rent money needed to go up my arm.

**AU: What does it mean to be part of the Jaks' Skateboard Team?**

R: It's just a brotherhood. It's about skateboarding despite what some people think (even on the team). It's just, you know, you can go anywhere where Jaks live and you're hooked up. That's it man.

C: Totally man! It's about skateboarding and beer drinking and Absolute Music, man.

R: Oh yeah! It's about music, too.

**AU: Punk or black metal?**

C: Both

R: Black Punk

C: Good one!

**AU: What brand of ice cream or conditioner do you recommend?**

R: Haagen-Dazs

C: I am confused!

**AU: Who is Alice Adolf?**

C: T.A.'s mom. Mike Anus's mom. She's awesome... addicted to bingo, but she's awesome.

R: Yeah, she has been part of the whole thing for a long time - she's family. Family of the Jaks, family to us. She used to come down and make a salmon feast at the skate comp, and try to get people to come to her place.

**AU: Favourite band of all time?**

R: I dunno, couldn't say one. Dead Boys is right up there.

C: I can say Discharge, Germs, Merciful Fate.

R: Discharge is right up there too. I saw them here [at The Smilin' Buddha].

**AU: Who should we interview next?**

C: Well, if you can get a hold of him, Cory Campbell would be awesome.

R: Casual would be a good interview.

C: Oh yeah! Totally, I agree with that! Oh, fuck yeah!

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[skullskates.com/jaks/jaksnew.html](http://skullskates.com/jaks/jaksnew.html)

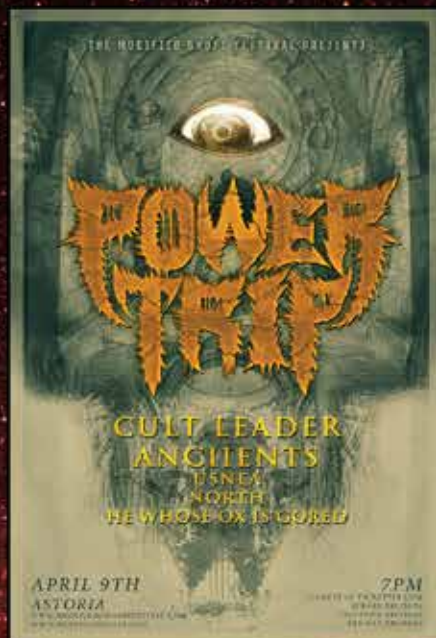
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# Absolute Live Reviews

**Propagandhi**  
**Belvedere**  
**Magdalene**  
**Dickens Pub, Calgary AB**  
**Feb 11th, 2016**

On Thursday, February 11th, the Winnipeg political punk band Propagandhi played to a very energetic crowd in a completely sold-out Dicken's Pub. It's always nice to see this vegan-friendly, animal rights activist band play in a city that is renowned for its horrible animal cruelty. Every year in July, the city of Calgary abuses all types of animals for the sake of entertainment and calls it "the greatest outdoor show on earth". This, along with the fact that Alberta is primarily a beef consuming / producing province, makes it a strange place for such a band to come visit. However, their music has such a positive message that it's also a very constructive way to educate the long-term fans, as well as the newcomers, to this type of punk rock. Propagandhi has an array of lyrics that include messages about human rights, anti-bullying, sexuality and non-meat consumption, and

for the entire show, the crowd was cheering and singing along. Seeing this gives me hope that the band is doing their job and people are becoming aware of the atrocities that most humans just turn a blind eye to that are being performed every day. This show also introduced us to Propagandhi's newest member, Sulynn Hago, who shredded the guitar and was welcomed with extreme positivity by the crowd! The band played songs spanning their entire 20+ year discography, including one of my favourites: "Who Will Help Me Bake This Bread," from the album *How To Clean Everything*. I've seen Propagandhi three times in the last 16 years, and every time I see them, they fail to disappoint. This is a band that is fighting to keep people informed, but also has an amazing time on stage – you can see it from the smiles on all the members' faces while they are performing. Opening for Propagandhi were local bands Magdalene and Belvedere, who both showed us why they were selected as opening acts! It's been awhile since I've seen Belvedere play and it was great seeing Casey Lewis behind the drum kit doing what he does best! After the show, I had

the opportunity to meet and thank all the band members in Propagandhi for coming and playing here, which had 16-year-old me jumping up and down with excitement. If you happened to be lucky enough to acquire a ticket to this sold-out event and liked what you saw and heard, I suggest you go back and pick up a few albums and really give a listen to what Chris is saying. This is the kind of eye-opening stuff that kids should be taught in schools around the world! I think that bands like Propagandhi, Doom and Disrupt have the ability to change people's views on how we treat each other and the animals that live with and around all of us.

-Cody No Teeth

**Black Sabbath**  
**Rival Sons**  
**Rogers Arena, Vancouver BC**  
**March 7, 2016**

This concert was a trip through time. I should have been more aware of the signs of an upcoming time vortex touching down in my general vicinity. Ira and I headed over on the ferry from Victoria. Ira was going with his girlfriend, but she bailed out due to the cancellation of Ozzy's last Black Sabbath show, so I got a ticket! Thanks Amanda, you only missed the best show of all time. We headed to the show well-inebriated, in classic concert fashion. After defeating the metal detectors, frisky security personnel, and a couple of ten-dollar beers in sippy cups, the show finally started. Rival Sons opened, and I was surprised to see how good they were. Heavily influenced by the 1960s, they played a new-age deep rock and roll, with notes of Jim Morrison, Molly Hatchet, Bob Dylan, and a prevailing Led Zeppelin undertone. They are definitely a band with some staying power. The Sabbath show opened with imagery of a digital devil stomping some smite into the city. Ozzy, always the showman, wandered onto the stage and let rip... Let's face it, Black Sabbath does not have any bad or weak songs. I felt like I was back in high school... The old songs really take me back. One look around, and it was obvious the old wizard Ozzy was working his musical magic on all of us. Clouds of narcotic smoke was billowing through the

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entire building. All of a sudden, I was yanked from my time trip by a flying ice cube, perfectly aimed from the box seats right above us. My buddies from Whistler were right above us; a couple of precious box tickets were passed down. We abandoned our seats and proceeded to an upgrade of epic proportions. We walked in, welcomed by all with a mitt full of drink tickets, and the time trip continued. Black Sabbath ground on, taking me back into its warm embrace, back to a time just after high school when I moved to Whistler and was still a skier, before snowboards. I was ripping through the glades with same beats [I've heard] a million times before and since, on my old Sony Walkman. Down through the ages the Black Sabbath trip has taken me, right to the here and now on the ferry, on the way back. Looking around, all that I see is old and new rockers recovering from the time trip, purged of excess energy by the power of Black Sabbath.

-Brydon Parker



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## Wacken Metal Battle Canada Updates

**The Wacken Metal Battle thunders on... here are the standings as of March 29th, 2016**

**Vancouver**  
Most Recent Round: Round 3, March 23  
Winner: The Mountain Man  
Next Battle: Final, May 1

**Edmonton**  
Most Recent Round: Round 2

Winner: Mongol  
Next Battle: Round 3, March 31  
**Calgary**  
Most Recent Round: Final, March 19  
Winner: Sentient  
Next Battle: Prairie Final, March 16

**Saskatchewan**  
Most Recent Round: Final, March 25  
Winner: Scythra  
Next Battle: Prairie Final April 16 (Calgary)

**Manitoba**  
Most Recent Round: Final, March 18  
Winner: Cell  
Next Battle: Prairie Final, April 16

(Calgary)  
**Hamilton**  
Most Recent Round: Round 1, March 12  
Winner: Profaner  
Next Battle: Semi-Final, April 16 (Toronto)

**Toronto**  
Most Recent Round: Round 4, March 25  
Winner: Door To Door Human Gore  
Next Battle: Round 5, April 1

**Montreal**  
Most Recent Round: Round 2, March 26  
Winner: DistortHead  
Next Battle: Round 3, April 3

**Keep up to date on the Wacken Metal Battle Canada through the following links:**

[www.metalbattle.ca/](http://www.metalbattle.ca/)

<http://ashermediarelations.com/festivals-associations/wacken-metal-battle-canada-2016/>

## Absolute Film Reviews

### Cabin Fever Armory Films

This movie has a creepy beginning, with a backwoods hunter calling to his dog, only to find out what had happened, but the moments afterwards were pretty corny to watch, and a little over-the-top.

Things look average to begin, with the teens driving down a long and windy road through the country, and stopping by a corner store, and a little kid named Dennis sitting there wearing an easter bunny mask, biting Paul's hand when he tries to be friendly... it seemed a bit rushed compared to the original, but this is normal for a remake. However, there are effective moments when the redneck owners make their visitors unwelcome, which looked believably intimidating. We also have a moment with the dork Bert, goofing around with his rifle, then shooting it and almost losing control, which looked suspenseful and mildly comedic, too.

There are nicely shot scenes with Bert in the woods and the backwoods hunter all scarred up, trying to approach him that added some adrenaline to the scene, while a nice conversation between Paul and Karen sitting near a



lake flows well with them jumping in and having a good time..

There is a dark and effective moment with the group of friends getting together telling a campfire tale, as it looked strongly done, with a nice surprise visit by an eccentric person named Grim and his dog.

Things start up on who was affected by the virus, but again, we've seen it in the original, so there's nothing really new to see in this damn remake. There's something new here, in Grim's dog stalking around the area and acting vicious, showing that it is infected as well. This was one of the only new add-ons to the story, which sort of works, but not enough to make this flick average.

Bottom line, the original was made not too long ago, why does it deserve a remake? I seriously know what I'm talking about on remakes being overrated, as this is getting to be ridiculous! It proves that Hollywood is running out of ideas. When I was going to watch this flick, I was hoping for another sequel, although they were getting more and more disappointing. It's the same old story over again, with the characters looking a wee bit different. If you've seen the original, you're not missing out much on this one, except for the new twists that I've mentioned here.

Excerpt from: <http://racksandrazors.com/cabinfever2016.html>

-By Greg Tidderington

### The Witch

#### Rooks Nest Entertainment

Robert Eggers' directorial debut, the historical film *The Witch*, is more than haunting. Watching a Puritan family descend into madness is a spine-chiller; as an audience, most will notice why. But how many people will pick up on the fact that this movie is set before the Salem witch trials? The fact the craze happened as a result of misplaced fears and due to consumption of diseased rye is a detail deserving of mention. Without this knowledge, trying to understand this film will have some folks wondering what kind of point Eggers is making.

The film certainly highlights the hysteria that occurs after William (Ralph Ineson) and his family are told to leave by the village council. After an argument over sanctuary, the entire clan departs. One detail an eagle-eyed fan of CW's *Supernatural* will notice is that the Governor is played by Julian Richings (who plays Death in the television series). Could this nod be an intentional foreshadow of what's to come?

Perfectly isolated from the entire world, William's family knows they will face a difficult winter and prepares accordingly. However, problems arise far more quickly than the storms. First, the baby mysteriously disappears. William believes wolves have stolen him, and Katherine (Kate Dickie) begins her slow descent into madness.



What's worse, Caleb (Harvey Scrimshaw) is entering puberty, and Thomasin (Anya Taylor-Joy) becomes a target by everyone. The young twins, Mercy and Yonas (Ellie Grainger and Lucas Dawson) take on an unhealthy obsession of just being kids. They like playing with the family's black goat, conveniently named Black Philip (along with an ominous bunny), in a blatant foreshadow of what's to come, not understanding what being pious means. They believe their older sister is in league with the Devil.

Knowing some New England history helps makes this film enjoyable. Although the tale is a slow burn, (it could have benefited from being edited down by 15 minutes), the chills offered are more than enough to warrant a mandatory watching of *The Seventh Seal* by Ingmar Bergman afterward. Both movies court plague in different ways, and have a similar colour palette — which is a treat! The terror is all psychological. The performances by the leads Ineson and Dickie are intense, and Taylor-Joy steals the limelight with her subdued devotion to a god that is obviously not listening. As the terror gets worse, the big question is if she will give in to the whispers from the woods, or run back to the village, screaming for help.

New England's Edgar Allan Poe would suggest giving in to your innermost desires, while H.P. Lovecraft might advise exploring the mystery beyond the woods. There's a colour out of space existing in this film's gorgeous visual palette, which serves to drain the life away from this family. This look into the past can easily provide lessons today in what devotion can do to the soul. It does more to show that we all live in a fearful world.

-Ed Sum



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# Jacen Burrows

Interview by Ed Sum

Jacen Burrows is a prolific artist with a wonderful resume of works. He's worked with Garth Ennis for *Crossed*, Alan Moore for *Neonomicon*, and is illustrating the sequel, *Providence*, which is still ongoing. He's been drawing all his life, and always planned on being an illustrator. He had considered other avenues, including animation (he had wanted to study at CalArts) and graphic design, but that wasn't what he was looking for. He found his calling at Savannah College of Art and Design when they offered a Sequential Art program.

"I packed my bags and headed east," said Burrows. "But even with a comic-centric focus, my art was very rarely about superheroes. I was all about horror from an early age. All of my earliest sketchbooks are full of my take of many classic monsters."

I spoke with Mr. Burrows about his work:

**Absolute Underground: Were there any titles or creators that inspired you to pursue a career as an artist?**

Jacen Burrows: I had a small handful of comics growing up, but I didn't make the connection between my own love of drawing and comics until later. Mostly, I had old *MAD* magazines and some random *SGT. Rocks* from the spinner rack.

When I started collecting, I was overwhelmed by all of the stuff from the Big Two (Marvel and DC), so I wandered into the indie section.

I really started to love comics when I discovered *Grimjack*, *Scout*, *Grendel* and the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. I met *Turtles* creators Eastman and Laird at a con before the *Turtles* blew up, and it was a revelation. Normal dudes could make comics. You just needed an idea and passion. I loved that. *TMNT* led to *Daredevil* and *Elektra*, which led to other, better-known stuff. The book that had the biggest impact on me artistically, though, was when Epic released *Akira*. That was my bible.

**AU: What made you fall in love with the horror genre?**

JB: I'd read a good deal of the major Lovecraft stories in high school, but I dug into the lesser-known stuff when *Neonomicon* started. You really start to get a new feeling for the writer when you take in his work as a whole. Even his unfortunate and well-known racism stems from his fear of the world, and the smothering paranoia that he might end up with a broken mind like his poor mother. I think my own love of horror comes from being a scared kid. The best way to overcome your fears is to embrace them. Monsters stop being scary when you are the one making them up. It didn't take long for them to become the mascots of my life.

**AU: What's the story behind your current work, *Providence*?**

JB: It's a 12-issue series in which we examine the connections between all of the original H.P. Lovecraft stories and characters in a way that's never been done before. We are following a reporter on his journey through 1919 New England, trying to navigate the secret occult underbelly of America. Madness and horror follow, as one might expect.

**AU: What is it like working with Alan Moore, Garth Ennis and Warren Ellis?**

JB: It can be intimidating, knowing you are illustrating the ideas of people who have achieved the highest levels of respect in the industry. You don't want to disappoint them or

# Absolute comic gecken

their fan base... but in the end, all you can do is your best.

All of my collaborators have known they were getting the best I was capable of at the time. They know I take it seriously, and that I respect the writer's vision above all else. I'll never be the best artist in the medium, but they know I'll always work hard to live up to their stories. On the other hand, it is nice knowing your writers are always going to give you something worth pouring your blood, sweat, and tears into.

**AU: Do you have a bit of creative freedom to express a lot more beyond what the writers penned when setting up a comic book panel?**

JB: Alan Moore always has specific images in mind and uses a lot of detail to describe things, giving him a level of control that allows a lot of clever non-verbal storytelling, and hidden clues that accentuate the story. Garth has times of specificity, but is often looser with descriptions to allow for some freedom in composition, setting, character acting, etc. But I tend not to go too crazy with things that aren't in scripts out of fear that it'll take away from telling the story in a clean, clear way.

**AU: One detail I truly appreciate in your work is your attention to detail to the world constructed on a comic book page. I feel like I'm there! How much time do you spend in researching the period to get all those nuances, especially in the textures, right? In *Providence*, do you work closely with the colourist Juan Rodriguez?**

JB: Yeah, the colorist has a bitch of a job on *Providence*. Getting an authentic 1919 palette, finding wallpaper textures, etc. He's been doing a top-notch job. We usually go through a draft or two to get it just right. But my research into fashion, architecture, period technology, and the details of the period took months before I even started sketching panel one for the first page.

I had some research help on Alan's end and from *Avatar*, but this book has been a research beast. I've probably been a little over-obsessed with stuff, but I figure an artist doesn't get a project like this very many times in a career, where the level of historical accuracy and real world detail adds to the tangibility of the world we're trying to create for an audience that is actually paying attention to every minute detail.

**AU: What can readers expect in the final half of this series, *Providence*?**

JB: Our protagonist will finally arrive in *Providence*,

where Lovecraft spent most of his life, and where he based a lot of his stories. Robert is going to meet a lot of new characters and will find himself deeper down the rabbit hole than he can handle. We will finally start to learn what is coming up from the rabbit hole to meet him.

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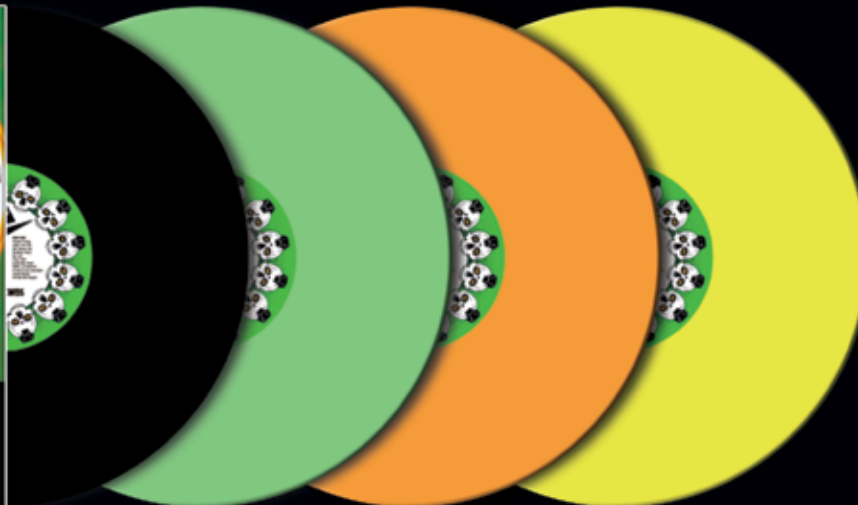
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